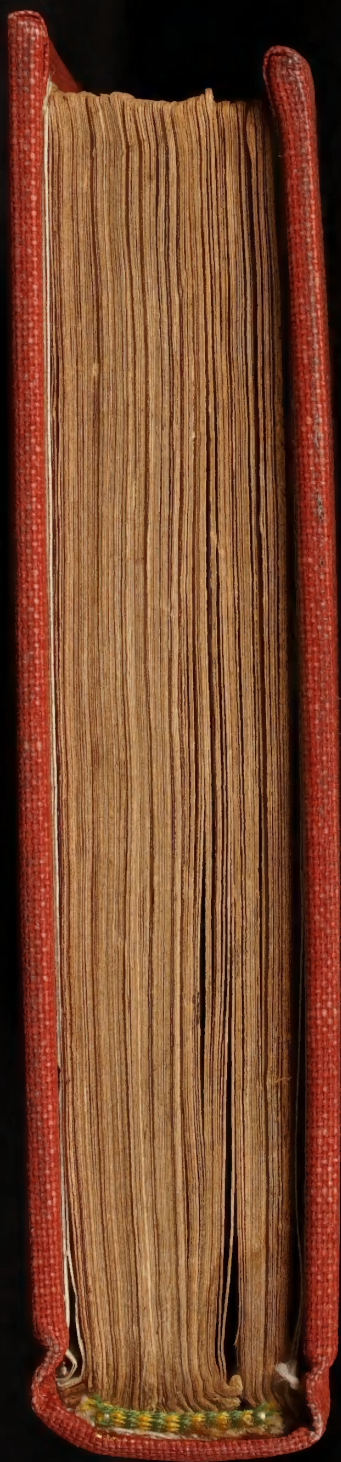


LETTERS
BETWEEN
EVREMOND
AND
WALLER

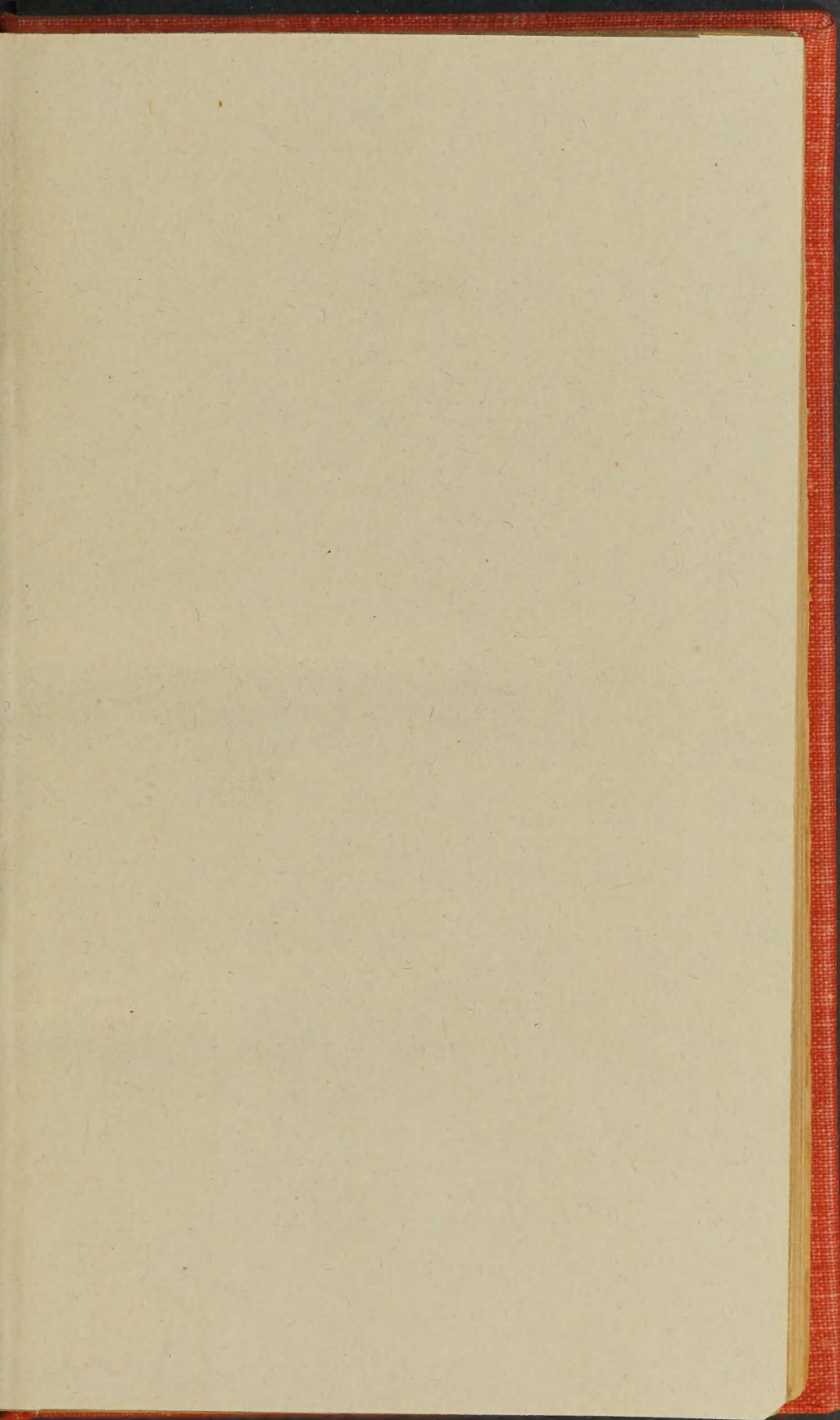
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LETTERS

SUPPOSED TO HAVE PASSED BETWEEN

109

M. DE ST. EVREMOND.

AND

MR. WALLER.

COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED

BY

DOCTOR LANGHORNE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES,

BY

A GENTLEMAN OF BALTIMORE.

BALTIMORE:

PUBLISHED BY EDWARD J. COALE.

.....
1813.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
WALLER
AND
ST. EVREMOND.

THESE letters may be classed among those *speciosa miracula* with which the literary world is sometimes dazzled and delighted. The specious imposture of Chatterton, and the bold forgery of the author of Littleton's letters, have long furnished themes for the ingenuity of literary discussion ; but the latter still remains a subject of wonder. If they were not written by that accomplished and profligate nobleman, who could so nearly imitate the inimitable stamp of genius? whence did the ingenious author derive the indelible Tyrian dye which Fancy delights to employ in her magick

loom? why, like the foolish bird of Arabia, should he hide his head in the sand of obscurity and shun the gaze of an admiring world?

But we are entering into a discussion which is wholly irrelevant to the present purpose. However the question might have been agitated formerly, if ever a doubt did exist, we believe it is not disputed in the present day, that the letters supposed to have passed between St. Evremond and Waller were written by Dr. Langhorne. Had they been published anonymously, without any allusion to the editor of the *Letters between Theodosius and Constantia*, the author might have experienced much difficulty in substantiating his title. He has infused into the composition of these letters so much of the very spirit, taste and temper of their supposed authors that the scepticism of incredulity is still alive, and yet withholds her entire belief of the innocent fraud, although it has been reduced to an almost indubitable certainty.

The publishers of this first American edition of these letters, having resolved to prefix a brief

sketch of the lives of Mr. Waller and Mons. De St. Evremond, we shall collect from different writers, such information as appears to be necessary to give the reader some idea of their respective characters, of and of the age in which they flourished.

EDMUND WALLER was born in March 1605. After receiving a good education, for which he was indebted to the care of his mother, he was elected to a seat in Parliament in his sixteenth or eighteenth year. Very early in life he contracted a marriage with Mrs. Banks, a great heiress in the city, who left him, a widower, at the age of five and twenty. How he solaced his grief under this severe affliction, may be learned from his works, where we find him wooing high born dames under poetical titles. But the pride of nobility was not to be softened by the blandishments of the muse. However women may be flattered by the praises of a man of wit, they have generally too much sense not to know that matrimony requires qualifications more solid than poetry to ensure its happiness.

When age has robbed them of the bloom of beauty, which first warmed the fancy of the poet, they fear that disgust or indifference, will succeed like the beams of the morning chasing the pleasing vision from the pillow of the lover. "Many qualities," says Dr. Johnson, "contribute to domestic happiness, upon which poetry has no colours to bestow; and many airs and sallies may delight imagination, which he who flatters them can never approve. There are charms made only for distant admiration. No spectacle is nobler than a blaze."

Waller was a member of the long parliament in 1640. Upon the king's demand of a supply, he made one of those noisy speeches, according to Dr. Johnson, which disaffection and discontent regularly dictate; a speech filled with hyperbolical complaints of imaginary grievances. During that session he was employed in managing the prosecution of Judge Crawley, who was impeached for his opinion in favour of the ship-money. His zeal on that occasion is supposed to have been owing to

His relationship to the celebrated Hampden, who had been particularly injured by the sentence of the court.

When the rupture between the Commons and the King took place, and the royal authority was set at open defiance, Waller is said to have withdrawn from the House. But it is also said, that he returned with the King's permission, and sent him a thousand broad pieces to aid him in maintaining his power. This circumstance is rendered extremely probable by the subsequent discovery of the combination which was known by the name of Waller's plot. The limits of a preface do not allow us to enter into the particulars of this affair. They are indeed clouded with much mystery. The little that is known may be gathered from the biography of Johnson and the History of Clarendon. As far as they go they redound very little to the credit of the Poet. He was the contriver of a glorious plot from which he meanly shrunk when he was discovered, and endeavoured to screen himself by deserting and surrendering.

his companions. Whether Lords Portland and Conway did join with him, is a matter of no consequence as it regards the integrity of Waller. He either betrayed his co-adjutors or wrongfully accused them. "Waller," says Clarendon "was so
 " confounded with fear, that he confessed whate-
 " ver he had heard, said, thought or seen : all that
 " he knew of himself, and all that he suspected of
 " others, without concealing any person of what de-
 " gree or quality soever, or any discourse which
 " he had ever upon any occasion entertained with
 " them ; what such and such ladies of great ho-
 " nour, to whom, upon the credit of his wit and
 " great reputation, he had been admitted, had spoke
 " to him in their chambers upon the proceedings
 " in the houses, and how they had encouraged him
 " to oppose them ; what correspondence and inter-
 " course they had with some Ministers of state
 " at Oxford, and how they had conveyed all intel-
 " ligence thither."

Waller was expelled from the house, and afterwards tried and condemned by a council of war ; during a reprieve, for which he was indebted

to the humanity of Essex, he preserved "his dear-bought life" by paying a fine of ten thousand pounds and going into banishment.

When he arrived at Paris, which city he selected as the place of his exile, he seems to have forgotten the ignominy of his recent confessions and intreaties. His fortune, though considerably impaired, still enabled him to support a splendid establishment, and to exercise a hospitable disposition ; and his vivacity made his society eagerly courted by the wits of that age. From time to time, says Johnson, he amused himself with poetry, in which he sometimes speaks of the rebels and their usurpation, in the natural language of an honest man.

His extravagance, however, having exhausted his resources, he solicited and obtained from the Protector permission to return. He was received by Cromwell, with the familiarity of a friend, and he repaid this kindness by a Panegyrick, which, Johnson says, has always been considered as the first of his poetical compositions. He afterwards wrote on the death of the Usurper ; and the Res-

toration of Charles the Second to his regal rights soon supplied another theme for his venal pen. Upon being told by Charles that his " Congratulation, was inferior to the Panegyrick," he is said to have replied " Poets, Sir, succeed best in fiction."

But so powerful were the attractions of his society, that notwithstanding the numerous instances of contemptible meanness which he had exhibited in the course of his life, he was still courted by the witty and the noble. In Parliament he was, says Burnet, the delight of the House, and though old, said the liveliest things of any among them. A single remark of his may be quoted as an instance both of his wit and his prudence. When King James knew that he was about to marry his daughter to a clergyman, he ordered a gentleman to tell him, that " the King wondered he should think of marrying his daughter to a falling church." " The King" said Waller " does me great honour in taking notice of my domestic affairs : but I have

lived long enough to observe that this falling Church has got a trick of rising again."

It would be injustice to his memory were we to neglect his reproof of the Duke of Buckingham. Being present when this witty nobleman talked profanely before King Charles, he said to him, " My Lord, I am a great deal older than your Grace, and have, I believe, heard more arguments for Atheism than ever your Grace did ; but I have lived long enough to see there is nothing in them ; and so, I hope, your Grace will."

He died on the 21st October, 1687.

We shall conclude this very brief account of the life of Waller by inserting his character, both moral and intellectual as it has been drawn by Clarendon, whose intimacy with him is a sufficient pledge for his fidelity.

" Edmund Waller was born to a very fair estate, by the parsimony or frugality of a wise father and mother ; and he thought it so commendable an advantage, that he resolved to improve it with his utmost care, upon which, in his

nature, he was too much intent ; and in order to
 that, he was so much reserved and retired, that
 he was scarcely ever heard of, till by his address
 and dexterity he had gotten a very rich wife in
 the city, against all the recommendation and
 countenance and authority of the Court, which
 was thoroughly engaged on the behalf of Mr.
 Crofts, and which used to be successful, in that
 age, against any opposition. He had the good
 fortune to have an alliance and friendship with
 Dr. Mosely, who had assisted and instructed him
 in the reading many good books, to which his na-
 tural parts and promptitude inclined him, espec-
 ally in the poets ; and at the age when other men
 used to give over writing verses (for he was near
 thirty years when he first engaged himself in that
 exercise, at least, that he was known to do), he
 surprised the town with two or three pieces of
 that kind ; as if a tenth Muse had been newly born
 to cherish drooping poetry. The doctor at that time
 brought him into that company which was most
 celebrated for good conversation, where he was

“ very pleasant discourser in earnest and in jest,
 “ and therefore very grateful to all kind of compa-
 “ ny, where he was not the less esteemed for being
 “ very rich.”

He had been even nursed in parliaments, where he sat when he was very young ; and so, when they were resumed again (after a long intermission) he appeared in those assemblies with great advantage : having a graceful way of speaking, and by thinking much on several arguments (which his temper and complexion, that had much of melancholick, inclined him to), he seemed often to speak upon the sudden, when the occasion had only administered the opportunity of saying what he had thoroughly considered, which gave a great lustre to all he said ; which yet was rather of delight than weight. There needs no more be said, to extol the excellence and power of his wit, and pleasantness of his conversation, than, that it was of magnitude enough to cover a world of great faults ; that is, so to cover them, that they were not taken notice of to his reproach, viz. a narrowness in

his nature to the lowest degree ; an abjectness and want of courage to support him in any virtuous undertaking ; an insinuation and servile flattery to the height, the vainest and most imperious nature could be contented with ; that it preserved and won his life from those who were most resolved to take it, and in an occasion in which he ought to have been ambitious to have lost it ; and then preserved him again from the reproach and the contempt that was due to him for so preserving it, and for vindicating it at such a price that it had power to reconcile him to those whom he had most offended and provoked ; and continued to his age with that rare felicity, that his company was acceptable where his spirit was odious ; and he was at least pitied where he was most detested.

CHARLES DE ST. DENIS, SEIGNEUR DE ST. EVREMOND was born of a noble and ancient family, at St. Denis le Guast, in Lower Normandy, on the 11th of April, 1613. When very young he was sent to the College of Clermont, Paris, to be educated for the profession of the Law. But his ge-

nus not being adapted to the sedentary life and close meditation which are necessary in this arduous profession, he quitted the pursuit at an early period and went into the army, where he signalized himself on various occasions. He was scarcely sixteen years of age when he entered into the service, and his laudable ambition was soon gratified by the command of a company of foot, which he had the honour of leading to the first siege of Arras. After this he entered into the horse-service, and was member of the troop of guards of the Duke D'Anguien. He was at the engagement of Freiburg, and, in the following year, at the battle of Northirgen. He was then Lieutenant of the Guards to the Prince of Condé, and having been commanded to take post on an eminence with two squadrons, he suffered so severe a fire from the enemy, that almost the whole of his troops was destroyed.

He continued to serve under the Prince of Condé, in Germany and Flanders, and displayed so happy a union of the talents of the soldier and the accomplishments of the gentlemen, that he acquir-

ed the esteem and respect of all his companions in arms. These qualities procured him the notice of Turenne, the old Marshal D'Etrees, the Marshal De Grammont, the Marshal D'Albert and many others of the first distinction. But his particular intimates were the Count de Grammont, the Count d'Olonne, the Duke of Candalle, the Marshal de Clerembault and the Marshal de Crequi.

The first years that St. Eyremond was near the person of the Prince, he was treated with kindness and familiarity. The Prince loved to retire from the crowd of fawning sycophants, by which he was surrounded, and enjoy the society of a man of talents. Nor were his favours limited to the intercourse of personal friendship. Such was the confidence which was reposed in his abilities, that he was frequently sent to Court on affairs of consequence : in particular, when he was directed, in 1646, to carry the news of the taking of Furnes, he was charged to propose to cardinal Mazarin the siege of Dunkirk, and to regulate with that Minister whatever might be necessary to carry into execution this important enterprize.

Although so highly distinguished as to be among the favourites of so great a man as the Prince of Condé, St. Evremond could not resist the indulgence of that mischievous propensity which he had of making the failings of others the amusement of their friends. The Marshal de Clerembault and himself, though they revered their leader, amused themselves in this manner, at his expence, and sometimes carried their raillery so far as to lose sight of that respect which was due to the Prince and the friend. His irascible temper could not brook such familiarity, and it is said that his resentment against St. Evremond, was unusually violent. Shortly after this, however, the civil wars broke out, and the Prince was obliged to retire to the Low Countries; but when peace was restored, he generously forgave the indiscreet merrimen of his friends, and evinced his affection towards St. Evremond upon subsequent occasions.

After the taking of Dunkirk, St. Evremond went to serve in Catalonia. In the troubles which happened soon after, he always adhered to the

King, and his loyalty was rewarded by the commission of a Marshal de Camp and a pension of a thousand crowns. This was in September, 1652. During the civil war, he held several commands, and stood high in favour with the Duke de Candalle, who was the chief of the army in Catalonia. Candalle and the Cardinal Mazarin were at this time on very good terms; but in the accommodation which was made by that province, it seems that the Duke adopted measures which were not agreeable to the Cardinal, who had exerted all his ingenuity to draw him into his interests. The rank and power of the Duke prevented him from attack, but he was wounded indirectly by the arrest and imprisonment of his favourite, St. Evremond. The cause which was alleged for this step, was, that he had uttered some offensive jests at table; but the fact is, that he was supposed to have been one of the Duke's advisers to the measures which were obnoxious to the Cardinal, and no better mode could be devised to mortify him and revenge the disappointment of Mazarin. After a te-

dicus imprisonment of three months, he was released, but no time could erase from his mind the impressions of horror which the Bastile, the place of his confinement, had created.

About this time the Plenipotentiaries of the two Crowns having met to settle the famous Pyrenean treaty, the discernment of St. Evremond easily penetrated the secret designs of Cardinal Mazarin and Don Lewis de Haro. These able statesmen exerted all the arts of diplomacy to deceive each other, but, in reality, they were equally anxious for peace, though from different motives. When St. Evremond left Paris to attend this conference, he promised to communicate what passed to his friends. The treaty, which was concluded, was generally considered as disadvantageous to France, and St. Evremond, whether to gratify his resentment against Mazarin, or merely to perform his epistolary promise, ridiculed its provisions with that poignancy of wit, for which he was distinguished, both in writing and conversation. To this letter, which was addressed to the Marshal

de Crequi, the writer of it attributed his subsequent disgrace.

Upon the restoration of Charles II. to the Crown of England, he received congratulations from all the Princes of Europe. In the magnificent embassy which was sent from France, upon this occasion, St Evremond, and many other persons of distinction, accompanied the celebrated Count de Soissons, who represented the French Monarch. St. Evremond remained six months in England and became particularly known to the King, the Duke of York and other noblemen. When his letter to de Crequi, in which the peace of the Pyrenees was so severely attacked, was discovered, and his ruin determined upon, he remembered the cordiality with which he had been received in England; and after vainly endeavoring to avoid the persecution of his enemies in Normandy, the Spanish Low Countries, and Holland, he returned to that country. At this gay and dissipated court, it would be superfluous to say, that the gallantry and wit of the celebrated exile, procured him such a reception as

his talents and his misfortunes entitled him to expect.

It was at this period of his life that the following letters may be supposed to have been written. With a man of his temperament no society could be more congenial than that in which he now passed his days. The English court was then enlightened and disgraced by some of the finest wits which that country has ever produced. Among these St. Evremond was a welcome guest. He was on terms of familiarity with the Dukes of Buckingham and Ormond, the Earls of St. Albans and Arlington, Lord Crofts and other noblemen. He read much, and frequented the society of learned men, such as Hobbes, Cowley, Waller, Dr. Vossious, &c.

It may not be unworthy of note, among the curious, that Hyde Park, so famous in the annals of modern dissipation, was opened about this period. Hyde Park, every one knows, says the sprightly writer of the memoirs of Count Grammont is the promenade of London: nothing was so much in

fashion, during the fine weather, as that promenade, which was the rendezvous of magnificence and beauty : every one, therefore, who had either sparkling eyes or a splendid equipage, constantly repaired thither ; the King seemed pleased with the place.

But a traveller, who wrote about the time of which we treat, was not so well pleased with this place as the King. As the book is rare, we may be pardoned for introducing a short quotation.

“ I did frequently,” he says, “ accompany my Lord N.... into a *field near the town*, which they call Hyde Park ; the place not unpleasant, and which they use as our course, but with nothing of that order, equipage and splendour, being such an assemblage of wretched jades and hackney-coaches, as, next a regiment of car-men, there is nothing approaches the resemblance. This Park was (it seems) used by the late King and Nobility for the freshness of the air, and the goodly prospect : but it is that which now (besides all the other excises) they pay for here in England, though it be free in

all the world besides, every coach and horse which enters paying his mouthful, and permission of the publican, who has purchased it, for which the entrance is guarded with porters and long staves.”*

We would eagerly avail ourselves of this opportunity of presenting the reader with the rude outlines of a picture which our imagination has formed of this period of history. But although we are precluded from this task, by the nature of that which we have undertaken, we hope we shall not incur the censure of prolixity, by adding a few remarks upon some of the most prominent characters who were cotemporary with the supposed authors of the following letters.

Among these *Sir Charles Sedley* holds a distinguished place. He was one of the politest scholars and most accomplished gentlemen, that graced the court of the second Charles. He was distinguished no less by the graces of his person, than the seductive influence of his pen. To a copious fund of wit, he added a considerable share of geni-

* *A Character of England, as it was lately presented to a Nobleman of France*, 12mo. 1659, p. 54.

us, and his poetry is more harmonious than is usually met with in the writings of that age. Sir Charles, indeed, wrote with ease, as well as his cotemporaries; but [not with that kind of silly, sentimental, unmeaning sort of ease for which their poetry was, in general, deservedly censured. His was not that sort of ease which is ridiculed in a pointed epigram:

You write with ease to shew your breeding,
But easy writing's d.....d hard reading.

He studied human nature, and was distinguished for the art of making himself agreeable, particularly to the ladies; for the lines of Lord Rochester, so often quoted, allude, not to his writings, but to his personal address. Hence those sentiments on the human passions, which we find in his poems, are, many of them, striking, and peculiarly his own: thus, of the *belle* passion, he observes, that it seldom survives hope:

“ Love does seldom Hope survive.”

But although love may be extinguished with hope,

yet it may be said that it is often succeeded by feelings of regard, which are more tranquil, more durable and productive of more real happiness. His capital performance is a poem on marriage, of which state he has not only conceived just and noble sentiments, but he has ridiculed, with great wit and propriety, the sordid motives that join so many wretched hands. He opens his poem with a view of that happy union in which our first parents were placed by their benevolent Creator. Such a scene could not but animate the imagination and awake the powers of genius. A poet of Sir Charles's sensibility could not be cold upon it. His language is the effusion of rapture. Sir Charles is so felicitous in his description of this union, when it is founded on the proper basis, that a reader would be ungrateful were he not to wish he had enjoyed to its fullest extent, that connubial bliss which his imagination has described. Those who wed merely from lucrative motives, and the practice is as common now as it was in his days, are delineated with a refined and indignant satire.

His similes are peculiarly apposite. A woman, he says, who is thus prompted by avarice, would wed a coffin were the hinges gold. His wit always rises with his indignation :

Thus might she clasp a loathsome toad in bed,
Because he bears a pearl within his head.

As the excellence of lyric poetry was supposed, at that time, to consist rather in elegant wit and ease, than in exuberance of fancy, imagery and enthusiasm, SEDLEY must have made no indifferent figure in that species of composition.

We may hear him once more enforcing the generous doctrine of pure love in the lyric strain :

See ! Hymen comes ; how his torch blazes !

Looser loves how dim they burn !

No pleasure equals chaste embraces,

When we love for love return.

When Fortune makes the match he rages,

And forsakes th' unequal pair,

But when Love two hearts engages,

The kind god is ever there.

Regard not then high blood nor riches,
 You that would his blessings have ;
 Let untaught Love guide all your wishes ;
 Hymen should be Cupid's slave.

The senseless sing-song, which was so fashionable in the court of Charles II. and which, without either sentiment or connection, flowed from the silver pens of the *mob of gentlemen*, was burlesqued by SEDLEY in as happy a vein of spirit and humour, as the *Arcadian* nonsense of Lord Suffolk and his brethren was by Swift in his song *a la mode*. SEDLEY's song is as follows :

SONG,

A LA MODE.

O'er the desert, 'cross the meadow,
 Hunters blew the merry horn ;
 Phœbus chas'd the fleeting shadow,
 Echo she reply'd in scorn.
 Still adoring,
 And deploring,
 Why must Thyrsis lose his life ?

Rivers murmur'd from their fountains,
 Acorns dropping from their oaks,
 Fawns came tripping o'er the mountains,
 Fishes bit the naked hooks.

Still admiring
 And desiring

When shall Phyllis be a wife ?*

Sedley, says Burnet, had a more sudden and copious wit, which furnished a perpetual run of discourse, but he was not so correct as Lord Dorset nor so sparkling as Lord Rochester. He died 20th August, 1701.

COUNT GRAMMONT, who likewise flourished at this period, is not ranked among the men of letters, but some pieces which are attributed to him, evince that he would have been no indifferent poet. But, a gentleman by birth, and a soldier by choice, he seems to have paid no other service to the muses, than to beg a *jeu d'esprit* for the ladies, among whom he was an universal favourite. His genius and general manners have been described by Bussi and St. Evremond ; but the most faithful

* *Effusions of Fancy.*

portrait is probably that which has been drawn by his kinsman, Count Hamilton, an Irish gentleman, whose writings are said by Voltaire to have all the humour without the burlesque of Scarron. The memoirs of Count Grammont may be read by those who are not fastidious, with undiminished delight, *ab ovo usque ad mala*. They convey a more lively idea of their hero and contain a more distinct illustration of the manners of the age than any other work of the same size.

He was thought to be the original of *The Forced Marriage*. The circumstance is mentioned in this correspondence, but it is related differently by others. It is said that when the brothers of Miss Hamilton overtook him on his way to France, they cried out "Count Grammont, have you forgot nothing at London?" "Excuse me," replied the Count, guessing their errand, "I forgot to marry your sister; so lead on, and let us finish that affair."

By the pleasantry of the answer, this was the same Grammont who commanded at the siege of a place, the governor of which capitulated after a

short defence, and obtained an easy capitulation: Upon his introduction to Grammont he said "I'll tell you a secret; the reason of my capitulation was because I was in want of powder." "And secret for secret," replied Monsieur, "the reason of my granting you such an easy capitulation was because I was in want of ball*."

Count Grammont and his lady left England in 1669. King Charles, in a letter to his sister, the duchess of Orleans, dated 24th October in that year, says, "I writ to you yesterday, by the compte de Grammont, but, I believe this letter will come sooner to your hands; for he goes by the way of Diepp, with his wife and family: and now that I have named her, I cannot chuse but againe desire you to be kinde to her; for, besides the meritt her family has on both sides, she is as good a creature as ever lived. I believe she will passe for a handsome woman in France; though she has not yett, since her lying in, recovered that good shape she had before; and I am affraide never will†."

* *Biog. Gallica*, vol. 1, p. 202. † *Dalrymple's Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 26.

The count fell dangerously ill in the year 1693, of which the king (Louis XIV) being informed, and knowing besides that he was inclined to libertinism, he was pleased to send the marquis of Dangeau to see how he did, and to advise him to think of God. The count, turning towards his wife, who had ever been a very devout lady, told her, “ Countess, if you don’t look to it, Dangeau will juggle you out of my conversion.” Madame de l’Enclos having afterwards written to M. de St. Evremond that count de Grammont was recovered and had become devout——

“I have learned,” answered he, “with great pleasure, that count de Grammont has recovered his former health, and acquired a new devotion. Hitherto I have been contented with being a plain honest man ; but I must do something more ; and I only wait for your example to become a devotee. You live in a country where people have wonderful advantages of saving their souls ; there, vice is almost as opposite to the mode as to virtue : sinning

passes for ill breeding, and shocks decency and good manners, as much as religion. Formerly it was enough to be wicked; now, one must be a scoundrel too, to be damned in France. They who have not regard enough for another life, are led to salvation by the consideration and duties of this.” —“ But there is enough upon a subject in which the conversion of the Count de Grammont has engaged us.”

The count de Grammont died in January 1707, at the age of eighty-six years.

The characters of Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Dorset, who, as lord Orford writes, was the finest gentleman of the voluptuous court of Charles the second, and in the gloomy one of king William, George Digby the earl of Bristol, the facetious Killgrew, and the beautiful Nell Gwyn, might here be introduced as further illustrative of the temper of these times. But this sketch has already swelled to a size which was not expected.

What remains of the life of St. Evremond, being little varied by incident, is soon described. It

appears that although surrounded by pleasure and enjoying the society of the finest wits of the age, he began to sigh for his native shores, after custom had made the novelty of his English life familiar. To attain this object he wrote frequently to his friends in France, but not being successful in his application, his spirits were depressed and he became the prey of a sort of languishing distemper. To relieve his melancholy he went to Holland in 1665, where his health was restored, and he acquired the friendship of the pensionary De Witt, and several of the most considerable persons of the state.

When he had resided there about four years, he was desired by Sir William Temple in the name of king Charles to return to England. Upon his return he was gladly received by his majesty, who bestowed upon him a pension of three hundred pounds sterling.

His life now acquired a new zest in the arrival of the duchess of Mazarin in England. Of this illustrious and beautiful woman, the victim of unmanly persecution, panegyric has been lavish.

Sylvestre, whose preface has been our principal guide in tracing the life of St. Evremond, says, that he became one of her most zealous and constant admirers: she was the subject of his finest performances in all the kinds of writing. In a thousand places he has celebrated her incomparable beauty, the agreeableness of her wit and the charms of her conversation: but all his encomiums are far short of what was due to her merits. He found at her house whatever was most honourable and polite in England, and whatever was most remarkable among foreign ministers. But what he esteemed above all, was that he saw Madam Mazarin every day, and that was his chief business. If time, which destroys the greatest and most beautiful things, which effaces even names and titles, could make us forget the beauty, rank and fortunes of Hortensia Mancini, the works of Monsieur de St. Evremond would establish her immortality. Her name and titles are better secured than if they had been engraven on marble and brass.

Her death affected him more sensibly than any other event of his life, and he often shed tears at the mention of her name. He did not long survive her, but died in September, 1703, at about the age of ninety. He was interred in Westminster Abbey, near to the learned Causaubon, Camden, Barrow and the poets Chaucer, Spencer, Cowley, &c.

His own character, as described by himself in a letter to his friend, Count Grammont, shall close this sketch.

He was a philosopher, equally removed from superstition and impiety ; a voluptuary, who had no less aversion from debauchery than inclination for pleasure ; a man, who had never felt the pressure of indigence and who had never been in possession of affluence : he lived in a condition, despised by those who have every thing, envied by those who have nothing, and relished by those who make their reason the foundation of their happiness. When he was young he hated profusion, being persuaded that some degree of wealth was neces-

sary for the convenience of a long life : when he was old, he could hardly endure economy, being of opinion, that want is little to be dreaded when a man has but little time left to be miserable. He was well pleased with nature, and did not complain of fortune. He hated vice, was indulgent to frailties, and lamented misfortunes. He sought not after the failings of men with a design to expose them, he only found what was ridiculous in them for his own amusement : he had a secret pleasure in discovering this himself ; and would, indeed, have had a still greater in discovering this to others, had he not been checked by discretion. Life, in his opinion, was too short to read all sorts of books, and to burden one's memory with a multitude of things, at the expence of one's judgment. He did not apply himself to the most learned writings, in order to acquire knowledge, but to the most rational, to fortify his reason. He sometimes chose the most delicate, to give delicacy to his own taste ; and sometimes the most agreeable, to give the same to his genius. It remains that he should

be described such as he was, in friendship and in religion. In friendship he was more constant than a philosopher, and more sincere than a young man of good nature without experience. With regard to religion, his piety consisted more in justice and charity, than in penance and mortification. He placed his confidence in God, trusting in his goodness ; and hoping that in the bosom of his Providence his repose and his felicity.

It is said of him, but upon what authority does not appear, and we are much inclined to doubt the fact, that St. Evremond during his long stay in England, always refused to learn the English language.

L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

M. DE ST. EVREMOND, &c.

LETTER I.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

GRAMMONT once told *Rochester*, that if he could, by any means, divest himself of one half of his wit, the other half would make him the most agreeable man in the world. This observation of the Count's did not strike me much when I heard it, but I have often remarked the propriety of it since. Last night I supped at Lord R.....'s, with a select party. On such occasions he is not ambitious of shining—He is rather pleasant than arch—He is, comparatively, reserved; but you find something in that restraint which is more agreeable than the utmost exertion of talents in others. The reserve of *Rochester* gives you the idea of a copious river, that fills its channel, and seems as if it could easily overflow its banks,

but is unwilling to spoil the beauty and verdure of the plains. The most perfect good humor was supported through the whole evening; nor was it in the least disturbed, when, (unexpectedly) towards the end of it, the King came in.* Something has vexed him, said *Rochester*; he never does me this honour but when he is in an ill humour. The following dialogue, or something very like it, ensued:

The KING.

How the D——l have I got here? the knaves have sold every cloak in the wardrobe.

ROCHESTER.

Those knaves are fools. That is a part of dress, which, for their own sakes, your Majesty ought never to be without.

The KING.

Pshaw! I am vexed.

ROCHESTER.

I am glad of it. I hate still life. Your Majesty is never so entertaining as when——

The KING.

Ridiculous! I believe the *English* are the most untractable people upon earth.

* *No unusual thing with Charles II.*

ROCHESTER.

I most humbly beg your Majesty's pardon, if I presume, in that respect—

THE KING.

You would find them so, were you in my place, and obliged to govern.

ROCHESTER.

Were I in your Majesty's place, I would not govern at all.

THE KING.

How then?

ROCHESTER.

I would send for my good Lord of Rochester, and command him to govern.

THE KING.

O ! but the singular modesty of that nobleman !

ROCHESTER.

He would certainly conform himself to your Majesty's bright example. How gloriously would the two grand social virtues flourish under his auspices !

THE KING.

O prisca fides ! What can those be ?

ROCHESTER.

The love of wine and women.

The KING.

God bless your Majesty !

ROCHESTER.

Those attachments keep the world in good humour, and, therefore, I say they are social virtues—Let the Bishop of Salisbury deny it if he can.

The KING.

He died last night—Have you a mind to succeed him ?

ROCHESTER.

On condition that I shall neither be called upon to preach on the thirtieth of January, nor on the twenty-ninth of May.

The KING.

Those conditions are curious—You object to the first, I suppose, because it is a melancholy subject ; but the other—

ROCHESTER.

Would be a melancholy subject too.

The KING.

That is too much—

ROCHESTER.

Nay, I only mean that the business would be a little too grave for the day. Nothing but the in-

dulgence of the two grand social virtues could be a proper testimony, of my joy on this occasion.

The KING.

Rochester, thou art the happiest fellow in my dominions—Let me perish if I do not envy thee thy impudence !

It is in some such strain of conversation, generally that this prince passes off his chagrin ; and he never suffers his dignity to stand in the way of his humour. If happiness be the end of wisdom, I know not who has a right to censure his conduct.

LETTER II.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

PUNISHMENTS are distributed so very unequally in this world, that I have often thought it would afford a fair argument at least for the probability of retribution, and a more equal dispensation of justice in the next. The fault, if it may be called such, that forced me into exile, was of a much more favourable complexion than *Rochester's*, in the liberties he took with his King, or even yours in repeating them. Monsieur *De Neuville* once said to me, that if the *French* and the *English* could make an exchange of Monarchs, both the people and the princes would find their advantage in it. It is certain that the humours of *Charles* would not so much expose his dignity in the court of *France*. He would be secure in the secrecy, the fidelity and obsequiousness of his courtiers. Even when he was there in no character at all, he had always more respect paid him, than the *English* have shewn him since he was restored to his kingdom. I have many times remarked, that the people of *England*, in general, treat their kings as they do their wives—Very fond of them at

first: afterwards, they neither love nor respect them, yet are violent in defence of their honour, and will suffer none to use them ill but themselves. The matrimonial conduct of *Henry the Eighth*, was not unlike the political conduct of the *English* under *Charles the first*. At first they adored him; afterwards they grew jealous; and, to crown all, they cut off his head. The mode of government that followed might not improperly be compared to a state of keeping, where, in the selfish, subtle, and ambitious mistress artfully draws you into that submission and servility that would never have been exacted by the faithful wife. Yet what arts of ingenious blamishment were exerted to soothe the Usurper, and to soften the idea of usurpation! I remember that the finest poet of the age lent his persuasive powers to effect these purposes. I own, I do not envy the reputation he acquired by it, when I consider that there are, in the next world, such people as *Minos*, *Rhadamanthus* and *Æacus*.

LETTER III.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

THE best method of answering the strictures contained in the concluding part of your letter, is to begin where you end, in the infernal regions. The hero of the *Ænied*, you know, in order to secure a favourable reception in those quarters, is commanded to gather the golden bough, and present it as a *douceur* to the Empress of the Shades. Do not you understand this allegory?—You have made a bad use, indeed, of your poetical reading. This golden branch, so grateful to the subterranean *Juno*, is nothing more than praise.

*Hoc sibi pulcha suum ferri Proserpina munus
Instituit—*

Observe how beautifully the poet shadows forth the difficulties that attend this delicate gift! how nicely it lies concealed!

*Latet arbore opaca,
Aureus et foliis, et lento vimine ramus.*

—————*Hunc tegit omnis
Lucus, et obscuris claudunt convallibus umbra.*

The propriety of its being sacred to the female character !

Junoni Infernæ dictus sacer—

But the beauty and consistency of the allegory are peculiarly striking, when the hero is directed in his search by the doves of *Venus*. Who does not see that softness and complaisancy of manners, the ground of pleasing address, and agreeable flattery, depicted in those doves.

Maternas agnoscit aves, lætusque precatur.

Este duces—

But *Venus* herself is to assist on this great occasion. Softness and complaisance, without elegance and beauty, will not attain to this persuasive compliment. It must be

—rite repertum,

and therefore the goddess of elegance and beauty is invoked :

—Tuque, O, dubiis, ne defice, rebus,

Diva Parens—

There is not in any part of Virgil's works, perhaps not in all antiquity, a more beautiful or better-wrought allegory than this.

But has it not its use too, as well as its beauty ? Has not the Poet left us an instructive les-

son in what manner we are to deal with difficult men in difficult times? If *Pluto*, or the wife of *Pluto*, is to be appeased, and rendered accessible by this golden branch, I should have but an indifferent opinion of that man's discretion who would not go in quest of it.—For my own part, whenever I am called upon to attend her *Elysian* Majesty, I will not fail to carry this along with me, and then, though I may have written forty panegyrics on *Cromwell*, I shall have no occasion to be afraid of *Minos*.

LETTER IV.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.¹

WERE it possible to prevent gallantry from running into the spirit of intrigue, nothing certainly could be more agreeable; but the two ideas are hardly to be separated before that period of life which you and I have attained. Nothing, indeed, can be more offensive than the gallantry of our years. It is the harmless offspring of memory and fancy, amusing itself with the shadows of pleasures that are past. Let gay youth, and graver age count this ridiculous; if we find the *Tædium Vitæ* in any degree diverted by it, we have a right to indulge it. The recollection of former enjoyments is all that age has to subsist upon. To treat with courtliness, and contemplate with pleasure, such objects as once afforded us delight, is the religion of nature—'tis a sacrifice of gratitude—'tis a testimony of content.—Besides, I know not whether by these attachments we may not lengthen as well as lighten life.

*Waller, qui ne sent rien des maux de la vieillesse,
Dont la vivacité faite honte à jeunes gens,*

*S'attache a la Beaute pour vivre plus long temps,
Et ce qu'on nommeroit dans un autre foiblesse
Est en ce rare Esprit une sage tendresse,
Qui le fait resister a l'injure des ans.*

Your friend *Rymer* has given a better turn to these lines :

*Vain gallants, look on Waller and despair,
He, only he, may boast the grand receipt ;
Of fourscore years he never feels the weight ;
Still in his element when with the fair ;
There gay and fresh, drinks in the rosie air :
There happy, he enjoys his leisure hours,
Nor thinks of winter whilst amidst the flowers.*

The gallantry of the present times seems to be of a genius very different from that which prevailed in our better days. It is fallen back into the original barbarism of nature. The affair of poor *Shrewsbury* is a shocking instance of this. There is nothing extraordinary in the duel between him and the *Duke of Buckingham* ; though it was expected that his well known indifference about lady *Shrewsbury's* commerce with his Grace, would have saved him from the folly of thinking his honour concerned in the affair : but in the conduct of that bold and abandoned woman, there was something that forbids one to

think of her without detestation—you have been informed, that, during the engagement, she held the Duke's horses in the habit of a page. I have lately been told that she had pistols concealed, and that she had pledged her honour to shoot both Shrewsbury and herself, if the husband should prove victorious. It was a weakness and want of honour in the Duke to expose his antagonist to so unfair, and so contemptible a death; but it was a still greater weakness to be capable of loving a woman, who wanted the characteristics of her sex, tenderness and delicacy. The genius of bold and vulgar prostitution! What a depraved spirit! what a groveling soul must he have, who can mix his passions with any thing so odious! A masculine woman is my immortal aversion! Masculine in person, or in spirit, she is equally dreadful! Courage in that sex is to me as disgusting as effeminacy in ours. I cannot bear to find even their sentiments of the male-kind—A female divine, a female lawyer, a female historian, a female politician, are all insupportable monsters! Out of sex! Out of character! Out of nature! Lost to the very idea of propriety! and always affected to the last excess of absurdity!*

* Upon the first edition of this work the reviewers made the following observations on this part of

How different from such is one whom we have had the honour to know, and the happiness to

St. Evremond's letter. "If the author," say they "had stopped at declaring that he could not bear to find even the sentiments of women of the male kind, his remarks would have been just and useful. But surely it is arrogant in man, and injurious to woman, to suppose truth and knowledge to be in this author's sense of the male kind. It is difficult to suppose how a woman becomes less feminine in her sentiments by knowing any truth either in divinity, history or law. Her sentiments seem to be out of she question; they may surely be just as feminine if she is knowing as if she is ignorant; whether she communicates her knowledge or conceals it; just as feminine combined with religion, as with superstition; with the spirit and ability of rational investigation, as with implicit faith in the tales of the nursery. Neither is it true that knowledge always renders the sex odious by affectation. To possess knowledge and abilities is one thing, to over-rate them another; to make intellectual acquisitions upon which custom has generally precluded the sex, is very different from giving up the character; and the author is unfortunate if he knows no woman, who, with all the elegance and softness of female sentiment and manners, has all the discernment and knowledge of the philosopher. It happens indeed, very frequently, that a learned dunce is more intolerable in petticoats than in breeches. A woman, that happens to have learnt old words, old facts, and old customs, and nothing else, is very apt to swell into ridiculous importance upon the acquisition; but it's can be no

converse with,—the amiable, and gentle HAMILTON! Though nature has given her a capacity equal to the most arduous attainments, with what address does she manage her excellent talents, and turn them to that kind of culture only which embellishes and endears the female character. —But, as a last proof of her merit, she has fixt irrevocably, the fickle, the volatile, the various Grammont! You knew his long attachment to her—At length, he has married her. In this measure, however, though he has shown both sense and honour, yet he proceeded on a principle, of which even you, who know him, will have no idea. And here, too, you will find another instance of the pernicious spirit of modern gallantry. Though *Grammont* believed himself that he intended absolutely to espouse the fair Hamilton, yet when every thing seemed to be settled, and the critical event drew near, the dæmon of gallantry took up his part—He played the character of *Hymen*, and rendered it so insupportably ridiculous, that *Grammont* could no longer bear the idea of marriage. The time appointed for the

reason why useful and important knowledge should not be trusted with genius, whose characteristics are modesty and diffidence, lest they should produce a monster, “lost to every idea of propriety, and affected to the last excess of absurdity.”

nuptials was at hand—the lover flew upon the wings of the wind to the—coast of France. This desertion was received with a proper indignation. A brother of the fair *Hamilton's*, a youth about sixteen or seventeen, pursued and overtook him almost as soon as he had arrived. “Grammont, (said he,) you blush to see me—
“you have reason—you know me well—return
“this moment with me to England, and do yourself the honour to espouse my sister—if that is
“an honour you chuse to decline,—I am the
“youngest of seven brothers, and if I fall by
“your hand, know, that there are still six living, whose arms are stronger and more experienced than mine, and who scorn, as much as
“I do, to survive the honour of a sister.” The Count stood silent for a while, and smiled upon the beardless champion—but it was not a smile of contempt. I have heard him say, that he never felt the sense of honour so strongly as at that moment. The phantom of false gallantry disappeared. “Let us return, (said he,) my brave
“friend—I blush to think of my folly—I deserve
“not the honour of being allied to your family;
“but I will hope to be indebted for it to your
“kind intercession.”

This was certainly very great. It was a return of reason; a recovery from a state of insa-

nity. What is true honour but the exercise of right reason? All else is false and frivolous. Is courage honour? What a strange confusion of ideas! A man of honour would, in that case, make a very despicable figure, if put in the same scale with a *Russian* bear. Young *Hamilton* behaved with a true sense of honour—his conduct was reasonable—it had the protection of a sister for its object. But what should we have thought of *Grammont*, had he acted a different part? In what light would he have appeared, had he lived to pierce the heart of the woman that he loved, through the hearts of seven brothers—the very idea is horror!—Yet this he certainly must have done, at least have attempted, had he placed honour in courage rather than in reason.

Had *Shrewsbury* a right sense of honour when he challenged *Buckingham*? More than half the court will tell you that he had—but, how ridiculous! Is the defection of an infamous woman a disgrace to the man she forsakes? Far otherwise—it is rather a mark of his integrity. The antipathy that vice has to virtue is a proof of this. It was rank cowardice, pusillanimity itself, that provoked *Shrewsbury* to the challenge. He was afraid that his courage should be doubted if he omitted it.

Yet how universal is this idea of false honour ! In one of the campaigns I made with the Duke *d'Euguien*, an officer, who had lost his mistress, thought it necessary to fight for her. When he applied to the Duke for permission, the latter asked him whether it was on account of the love he had for her, and whether he wanted, by killing his rival, to recover her. "No," (replied the officer) "but if I do not fight, my courage will be doubted." "If that is all," (said the Duke,) "you may be easy about the matter. I shall give you an opportunity of putting that out of question ; for, to-morrow, I intend to fight myself."

LETTER V.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

I NOW write to you from the Earl of *Devonshire's* where I have been for this fortnight past, paying my devotions to the genius of nature. Nothing can be more romantic than this country, except the region of the *Valois*; and nothing can equal this place * in beauty, but the borders of the Lake.

It was not, however, so much the desire of seeing natural curiosities that drew me down hither. There is a certain moral curiosity under this roof which I had long wished to see, and my Lord *Devonshire* had the goodness to indulge me by a very kind invitation.

I need not tell you that I mean the great philosopher, Mr. *Hobbs*, so distinguished for the singularity of his sentiments and his disposition.

I arrived a little before dinner, notwithstanding which, the Earl told me he believed I was too late to see Mr. *Hobbs* that day. "As he does not think like other men, (said he) it is his

* *Chatsworth.*

“ opinion that he should not live like other
“ men. I suppose he dined about two hours ago,
“ and he is now shut up for the rest of the day ;
“ your only time to see him is in the morning ;
“ but then he walks so fast up those hills, that
“ unless you are mounted on one of my ablest
“ hunters, you will not keep pace with him.”

It was not long, however, before I obtained an audience extraordinary of this literary potentate ; whom I found, like Jupiter, involved in clouds of his own raising. He was entrenched behind a regular battery of ten or twelve guns, charged with a stinking combustible called tobacco. Two or three of these he had fired off, and replaced them in the same order. A fourth he levelled so mathematically against me, that I was hardly able to maintain my post, though I assumed the character and dignity of ambassador from the Republic of Letters—“ I am sorry
“ for your Republic, (said Hobbs) for if they
“ send you to me in that capacity, they ei-
“ ther want me, or are afraid of me. Men have
“ but two motives for their applications, and
“ those are interest and fear. But the latter is,
“ in my opinion, most predominant.” I told him
“ That my commission extended no farther than
“ to make him their compliments, and to en-

“quire after his health.” “If that be all, (replied the philosopher) your republic does nothing more than negotiate by the maxim of other states, that is, by hypocrisy. All men are necessarily in a state of war; but all authors hate each other from principle. For my part, I am at enmity with the whole corps, from the Bishop of *Salisbury* down to the bell-man.—Nay, I hate their writings as much as I do themselves. There is nothing so pernicious as reading. It destroys originality of sentiment. My Lord *Devonshire* has more than ten thousand volumes in his house. I entreated his Lordship to lodge me as far as possible from that pestilential corner. I have but one book, and that is *Euclid*; but I begin to be tired of him. I believe he has done more harm than good—He has set fools a reasoning.”—“There is one thing in Mr. *Hobbs*’s conduct, (said Lord D——) “that I am unable to account for—He is always railing at books, yet always adding to their number.” “I write, my Lord, (answered *Hobbs*) to shew the folly of writing. Were all the books in the world on board one vessel, I should feel a greater pleasure than that *Lucretius* speaks of, in seeing the wreck.”——“But should you feel no ten-

“ derness for your own productions?”—“I care
“ for nothing, (added he) “ but the *Leviathan*,
“ and that might possibly escape by swimming.”

As he had frequently changed his political principles, I did not think it of consequence to enquire into his ideas of government. But, in the course of conversation, I found that he looked upon the principal engine of administration to be fear. “ All government, (said he) is in itself an evil. 'Tis nothing but the continual imposition of terror, and infliction of punishment. It must be owned, that it is an evil which the natural depravity of men has rendered necessary to the existence of society; but still it cannot in itself be looked upon with any other sensations than such as are excited by the view of its several instruments, the scourge, the gibbet, and the goal. The sight of majesty inspires me with no other ideas, than such as arise when I see the lowest executioner of the civil power.”—“ That is, (said Lord *Devonshire*,) you have the same respect for the king as for the hangman.”—“ Pardon me, my lord, (returned *Hobbs*, recollecting himself,) “ the king is a very worthy gentleman—You know I had the honor to teach him philosophy at *Paris*.”—“ O Mr. *Hobbs*! in that

“respect,” (replied his lordship,) “your royal
“pupil* does you much honor.”

You have known this singular man for some time. He said little concerning you, but that my Lord *Devonshire* sometimes made him angry by telling him that you made better verses than himself. “Poetry is a foolish thing,” (said *Hobbs*,) “but I hate to do any thing that is better done by others.”

* *Charles II.*

LETTER VI.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

THERE will be such men as *Hobbs*, so long as the world endures, and perhaps it is necessary that there should be such. It is for the interest of truth that sceptics and infidels should occasionally start up and give the alarm to society. Those countries that continue longest in the enjoyment of peace, are in the greatest danger either of losing their liberties through domestic encroachments, or of becoming a prey to the power of foreign invasion. The reason of this is partly the weakness and effeminacy which long relaxation brings on all orders of men, and partly the incapacity of defence arising from the disuse of war.—So it is in the state of moral and religious truth.—While their interests are unagitated, they become less attended to, less understood—in process of time, that knowledge which should be general, becomes the property of a few—Hence arbitrary tenets, and theological prerogative! Hence truth unexercised, in darker times, was soon so covered with the rust of superstition, that she lost the very principles and springs of her being. It is the spirit of enquiry that keeps her in a

proper condition of defence, that polishes, brightens, and refines her.

Hobbs, therefore, so far as he may be considered as an opposer of truth, is an useful member of society. But he is too feeble an enemy to be of much service in the contest. The system of his philosophy is purely constitutional, calculated for the meridian of his own proper being. *Hobbs* is naturally destitute both of courage and fortitude; and, of course, he thinks that fear is an universal principle of moral action.—With regard to interest, which he associates with fear, it can only be considered as a modification of that passion; for, in his opinion, it consists in nothing more than personal ease and security.—His ideas of government are still of less consequence than his opinions of moral principles. The light in which he views it, always changes with the change of his affairs. He is now full of fears that he shall suffer for the publication of his opinions.—If the people in power are so wrong-headed as to punish him, it is not the badge of tyranny he ought to give them—it is the cap of folly.

LETTER VII.

ST. EVERMOND TO WALLER.

THIS freedom, *Waller*, is a delightful thing. This ingenuous and unrestrained expression of ones feelings and opinions, this goal-delivery of the mind is the most happy privilege.

Yet, methinks, I cannot enjoy it as I would.—A man who, like *St. Evermond*, has been accustomed to live in courts, where the grossest adulation and insincerity are so necessary, acquires an habit of artificial expression—Where nature is no longer left to the force of her own perceptions, to conceal our real sentiments, and to substitute others, is studied as a science.—Thus long habits of dissimulation deprive us of the natural love of truth, as those animals we confine for our amusement, lose the desire of liberty.

In good time, sure, was I dismissed from these scenes of artifice and delusion, before the seeds of native ingenuity were totally corrupted.* I have yet some pleasure in the indulgence of ve-

* *Yet he was labouring through his whole life to be restored to them; but this is no unusual inconsistency.*

racity; and it affords me no unreasonable consolation, when I reflect, that the same attachment to truth, which occasioned my banishment, might have been utterly lost, if I had still enjoyed my country.

Yet that country, *Waller*, (I must confess my weakness,) that country still hangs upon my heart, and I never read the

—————*Repetendaque nunquam*
*Vale, Terra, dixi**—————

of *Ovid*, without emotions which I know not how to subdue—Be it yours, my friend, and courtly philosopher, to fortify my soul against these painful affections.—You who can apply philosophy to every thing, and make every thing philosophy, teach me a little of that happy accommodation. Tell me how I may reconcile inconsistencies—how I may love the country I have lost, and be satisfied with another.

Be it yours, likewise, to instruct me in the cultivation of that sincerity which, till this moment, has been the object of my thoughts, and let me gain something at least by the loss of place and favour. The soil you have to work

* *Ovid Met.* lib. XIII.

upon, is, I hope, not absolutely barren, though it may be over-run with weeds: The climate may assist you in your culture, and I cannot wish you better success, than that he who was *St. Evremond* in *France* may become *Waller* in *England*.

LETTER VIII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

SINCERITY ! Ingenuity of expression !—There are no such things in the world.

Sincerity peculiar to the *English* ! What contemptible opinion you must have of us ! Do you look upon us as in a state of nature ? Are we not formed into societies, polished and refined. And what can such a people have to do with sincerity ? It is the savage characteristic of savage life, the natural effect of wild and uncivilized qualities. It may prevail amongst the hords of *Tartary*, or the *Indians* of *North America*, but in cultivated societies it cannot possibly exist.

Sincerity ! the most unsociable of qualities ! Of all that is called virtue the most unprofitable ! Were it absolutely to take place, man could never be reconciled to man. It is upon the daily sacrifice of sincerity that the good-humour of life subsists. It is by the exercise of a contrary quality that the harmony of social intercourse is preserved.

Man is too vain a creature to allow the free commerce of truth. As she approaches his self-love is alarmed, and meets her as an invader. What, in this case, are we to do? Shall we not accommodate ourselves to the weakness of our nature?

Happy are the effects of that *complaisance*, which, assuming the fair and graceful appearance of truth, rejects her rigid qualities; and, finding an open and easy passage to the heart, scatters flowers along the avenues as she goes!

To what purpose is it that she cannot boast of her alliance to sincerity, while she may be allowed to derive her origin from benevolence? While her only end is our satisfaction, wherefore should we censure the means whereby she effects it?

Mistake me not, *St. Evremond*! I would not have those means unlimited. Gross adulation is a dangerous thing, and is, in its operation, like those poisons, which, while they are delicious to the palate, burn up the heart.

* * * * *

I am interrupted. I will say more to you tomorrow.

LETTER IX.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

YOU are mistaken, my good friend ! You are not so much inclined to sincerity as you might imagine. Is it possible *St. Evremond* could be sincere, when he complimented *Waller* with the task of instructing him in philosophy ?

*As well might fair Carlisle, whose conquering eyes
Pierce to the soul, and make the soul their prize.*

In all her majesty of charms arrayed.

Bow to the beauties of a village maid.

But though I smile at all this, and at your serious observations on sincerity, I cannot, without compassion, hear your complaints. Your exile, I perceive, is still painful to you, and could I help you to a little of that accommodating spirit you so frankly and perhaps archly, ascribe to me, I am persuaded you would find your account in it.

This spirit, however, is not to be obtained while we indulge the influence of certain affections ; and to teach you how to love your country, without lamenting the loss of it, is a task beyond my abilities.

But wherefore should we cherish those affections that will not let us live at peace? The question is obvious and not easy to be answered—You will say, perhaps, that such affections as have been implanted by nature, or have taken root in habit, are not to be overcome. You will plead for mechanical influences, and involuntary sensations—From my soul do I forgive those philosophers who maintain such doctrines: they contribute to reconcile us to ourselves, by providing us with apologies for a thousand weaknesses: but for my own part, I must evermore be of opinion, that by the indulgence of fanciful reflections, by a kind of mental intemperance and luxury of imagination, we lay up for ourselves the greatest part of our troublesome attachments and uneasy desires.

What *reasonable* claim has *France* to such a regard from *St. Evremond* as should inspire him with restless longings, and wear out his peace? Has nature irrevocably implanted this attachment?—But will nature do any thing inconsistent with the principles of reason? Is it of consequence either to her general laws, or to her appropriate instincts, that we should have an exclusive affection for that particular province, or country, where *chance* gave us birth.—It is

to nature we owe our being, but it is where choice or accident direct our parents, that we were born—An attachment to the place, therefore, must be the effect of whim or humour, rather than of reason, or nature.

But let us suppose that habit has created what nature did not inspire. Our attachment to every scene and object increases in proportion to the continuance of our acquaintance with it—Even things that are first beheld with disgust and aversion find their way into our favour by time ; and those affections, which nature herself seems to have shut up from certain objects, are insensibly drawn towards them by the influence of custom.

But neither reason nor nature have any thing to do in these effects ; for reason continues insensible to their whole process and operation, and nature frequently finds her own instincts counteracted by them.

The attachments of habit, therefore, have neither merit nor virtue ; they have no excellence, either moral or natural ; they receive no sanction from original instincts ; and they are no effect of rational choice.

Awake, my *St. Evremond* ! my friend ! my philosopher ! Shall dreams delude thee ?

.....*Vane Sembianze !*

Imagini del Di, guaste e corrotte

Da l'ombre de la notte !

Citizen of the World ! Shall dreams delude thee ? What else is this attachment to *France* ? Vain and irrational as the desires of capricious infancy ! Idle as our morning wishes for those scenes that fancy has presented to us in the night ! Citizen of the world, awake ! Consider all the humankind of nature gathered into one vast society : this portion of the universe we call the earth is our common country : it is true this portion is divided into many shares : but shall we be so childish as to hold our own in peculiar estimation ? Or is there any one indeed, that we can properly call our own ?—If it were our lot to be born in a country where liberty is not a birth-right, we have literally speaking, no country. Had *St. Evremond* been born in *Britain*, he might have called it his country, because he would have been born to the free enjoyment of its general privileges ; but a *Frenchman* has no country. He is an unfortunate dependent, liable to death or banishment, as the capricious inclinations, or the ill-informed judgment of his master shall determine. An *Englishman* must be banished by his country ; a *Frenchman* is banished by his

king—The former has a country from which he may go into exile, the latter has none.

Grieve not at the thought of losing what you never enjoyed. Rejoice in that protection and freedom, that liberty even of sentiment, which this island will afford you, and in which you so justly express your satisfaction.

When I sat down to write to you I intended to have said something on that subject; but I have been drawn beyond my bounds, and must continue indebted to you for all I had to say.

LETTER X.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

I AM angry—You have abused my country, and I will have my revenge. I will tell you your faults—You are the most singular of your singular nation. It is true, you have more wit and a better understanding than half the people in your island, and yet it is very seldom that you make any valuable use of either. The former you throw away upon women, whom you make vain without affection, and upon courtiers, who, while they have something more substantial in view, hardly envy you the enjoyment of it. The latter can only be compared to a faithful mirror, which reflects every object in the truest light, without receiving any impression.

You seem not to have any determining principles of conduct—You are carried away by accidental circumstances—You commit yourself wholly to chance, live without resolution, and think without choice. What you do to day you will avoid to-morrow, and repeat the day following; yet will you not once be at the trouble of giving yourself a reason either for what you do, or for what you avoid. If you may be al-

lowed to have any motive of action at all, it is merely a temporary inclination, the transient offspring of chance, or fancy.

Yet what shall I say of thee? thou friend of many colours, but beloved and admired in all! Shall I endeavour to imitate thy indifference, thy happy flexibility, thy undissipated dissipation?

Teach me, dear *Waller*, like thee to sail down the current of life without fear or disorder, obedient to every gale, and complying with every tide! Teach me, like thee, on whatever shore I am thrown, to make it my *optata Arena*.—*Horace*, and *Aristippus*, and *Epicurus*, those philosophers of common sense, shall assist you in the work of conversion.

I believe I have yet life enough left for such an acquisition. I am not so old as *Socrates* was when he learned to dance, nor near so old as *Cato* when he learned a language; and certainly the attainments I have in view are of much greater importance than either a poem, or a *Pyrrhic* dance.

Teach me, then, to be as happy, that is, to be as much at rest, as you are. Withdraw my heart from every object but yourself, and let me

not think any thing of so much consequence to my repose, that it should break it either in the preservation, or the pursuit of it. Is not such the doctrine I am to learn? If such it be, I despair: for I could not without much sorrow, lose even the privilege of this idle correspondence.

LETTER XI.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

I SHOULD have a hopeful pupil of you. First you reproach your master, then apply for your lesson. You censure me for acting without principles, and you would learn my principles of action. You accuse me of making no valuable use either of my wit or understanding ; you represent me as an example by no means imitable, yet I am to be the pattern of your conduct. Be contented, my sage *St. Evremond*, for once to be thought as inconsistent as your friend !

Still you will be only like the rest of the world ; for there is no such thing as consistency in human nature. Man is a ductile and changeable creature. It is rarely that he acts upon settled principles. The greatest part of his life is directed by chance, and he is, for the most part, influenced by casual impulses, and accidental circumstances—I perceive this to be the condition of humanity, and I conform myself to it. I am sensible that those contingencies over which we have no power, occasion so many changes, and have so much influence over our lives, that the very attempt to live uniformly or systemati-

cally, would be as absurd as to row against the current, when to suffer yourself to be borne down with it, would convey you as safely, and much more easily, to the end of your voyage.

The end of all philosophy is to set the heart at ease. If I find that compliance and accommodation will answer this purpose the most effectually, they are the very means I ought to adopt. I comply with fortune upon the same principles as I would with any other mistress, to keep her in good humour. If you tell me that fortune is quite as ideal as the rest of my mistresses, then I reply, that is to keep myself in good humour; and that certainly is no unimportant end.

You seem to be of the same opinion, when, in your abundant humility, you profess yourself my disciple. But you have an extensive process to go through, before you can be capable of those doctrines you propose to learn. Yet, be not alarmed. I do not mean that you should divest yourself of your warmest attachments, or sacrifice the love of glory, fame, or pleasure. I think those are false philosophers, who, to exempt us from the troublesome effects of our passions, would deprive us of the passions themselves. They are like those desperate surgeons, who for

the slightest wound would have recourse to amputation. Let love, fame, and glory be still the objects of your pursuit : but remember that every object of human attention is uncertain and evanescent. Enjoy the chace while it lasts—If you are thrown out, smile at the disappointment, and start some other game.

LETTER XII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

To be reconciled implicitly to every event and to pass through life without anxiety or disappointment, is certainly a most valuable effect of philosophy. This is the object of your ambition, and this is what you would learn from me. No, no, *St. Evremond*, do not deceive yourself. You would not be without your anxieties; you find a charm in your disappointments that flatters your vanity, when you consider the hardships of suffering merit; and your misfortunes serve to shew us how elegantly you can complain.

Would you lose the pleasure of painting to the Duchess of *Mazarin*, in such delicate colours, your mutual misfortunes? Would you be deprived of the honour of being a fellow sufferer with such a woman? A similarity of sufferings makes people friends. It draws them together, not only because they expect the mutual privilege of uttering their complaints, but because those complaints are best understood, and most effectually felt. They look upon the world with equal jealousy. They consider fortune as their common enemy, and as such they conspire against

her. This conspiracy begets friendship, and friendship affection.

If I had your wit and brilliant fancy, I would write such an *Eulogium* on your misfortunes as should perfectly reconcile you to them, without the assistance of philosophy. I would shew you how much your fame, your wit, your merit, is indebted to them; I would convince you how much unmerited sufferings contribute to exalt us in the opinion of the world. I would describe your reputation stretching beyond the limits of one nation, and by its increasing lustre casting a shade on your disgrace. I would represent the latent seeds of fortitude as animated and called forth by this trying event, which, in a series of uninterrupted felicity, might have been totally destroyed. I would give its due encomiums to that magnanimity which could still look with kindness on the scene of its sufferings. I would ascribe the tender passions and milder sentiments, the influence of pity and benevolence, the prevailings of modesty and diffidence, to the occasional exercises of affliction. The imagination should have been found to have profited no less than the other faculties. It should appear to be enriched, and to have caught new impressions from variety of senti-

ments and situations; to be softened and subdued by affecting sensations: Lastly, it should be employed in embellishing misfortune itself, and pour its harmonious complaint in the ear of sympathising beauty. The duchess of *M*—— should be the object addressed, who, being something more than a mere mortal, might well assume the character and compassion of a guardian angel.

LETTER XIII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

So kind and yet so perplexing, so engaging yet so volatile a friend have I never found.

From the beginning of your last letter, I expected nothing less than a serious lecture in practical philosophy—But we have hardly got to the end of one sentence, till the philosopher, instead of instructing his friend how to bear with misfortune, writes an encomium on misfortune itself.

Indeed, had I reason to believe but half of what you have advanced in favour of that *Monstrum horrendum*, I should, at the same time, have sufficient reason to acquiesce in it. But alas! my dear *Waller*! your colourings are too high. The zeal of friendship has overborne your reason; has destroyed your sagacity in the discernment, and your ingenuity in the expression of truth. Were I certainly either wiser or better for my misfortunes, they would hardly deserve that name; but that time which I should have devoted to the acquisition of knowledge, and the improvement of the mind, has been, for the most part, spent in useless regret.

It must be confessed, notwithstanding, that what you have charged me with drawing from my disappointments to soothe my vanity, is not far from the truth ; but I believe it is chargeable on all mankind. And surely nature acted altogether from her wisdom and benevolence, when she lent us self-love as an antidote to despair.

How artfully do you soothe and flatter me, when you mention the duchess of *M*—— in such an interesting and affecting manner !—Oh, *Waller* ! how well you know the heart ! For that I at once forgave you all your levities, your extravagant compliments, and ironical praise.

You may smile, if you please ; you may enjoy, with complaisancy, the power of your address ; but I must confess to you, I was utterly unable to resist the inclination of shewing your letter to madam *Mazarin*.

It was imprudent in the last degree : my vanity overacted its part. Instead of giving me credit for the compliments you paid me, her whole attention was turned from the subject to the writer, and I was in danger of finding a rival, where I hoped to have found a friend.

Yet this produced one agreeable effect. I told

her grace you was under an obligation to teach me your accommodating philosophy. She immediately professed a desire to become your pupil; and she hereby lays her indispensable commands upon you to furnish us with your lectures.

LETTER XIV.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

THE charm that bound *Proteus*, and compelled him to prophesy, could not be more powerful than that you have found out to make me philosophize. For as *Proteus*, though, possibly, something more of a God, was not by your account, more volatile than myself, nothing less than the magic in the name of *Mazarin* could have fixed me to the sober point of philosophy.

You may remember I told you, that you had an extensive process to go through, before you could arrive at that state of mind which is immediately reconciled to every event. I meant not that you should sacrifice your passions, or dismiss your desires. I did not propose to reduce you to a state of indifference to every object, for that would have been to cut off the sources of pleasure; and I am of opinion that our friend *Horace* was never more out in his philosophy, than in the following couplet:

H

* *Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque quæ potest facere, et servare beatum.*

For though to admire nothing may be a means of preventing regret, it can be no means of happiness, at least of that kind of happiness which obtains in my creed ; for that is pleasure. If ease be happiness, if an exemption from evil alone may be termed so, the dead have the best claim to it, and the inhabitants of vaults and charnels are more to be envied than the living.

But this was never the purpose of nature. The portion she gives her children is the enjoyment of their existence, and those are the most ungrateful who most neglect or depreciate this her first and greatest law.

Nothing that is not dear to us can be enjoyed ; for this reason, nature has given us attachments, affections, and desires.

* Thus translated by Creech :

“ *Nought to admire is all the art we know*

“ *To make men happy, and to keep them so.*”

Pope has borrowed this translation, because he could not find a better ; and then very ungratefully laughs at poor Creech for lending him it.

“ So take it in the very words of Creech.”

The end of these gifts was to promote our happiness ; when they are retained longer than that purpose can be answered ; when they are extended to objects out of our power, it is not nature that errs ; we alone are to blame, who misapply her gifts.

While we are attached to particular objects, that attachment constitutes our happiness, so long as they are in our power. When that ceases to be the case ; when this law of nature is obliged to give place to the contingencies of fortune, or is superseded by some other law of her own, then are we not to imitate nature in this case, and make the less submit to the greater ? No—we will not yield to this. We are determined to retain our attachments when their objects are vanished ; we cherish what is altogether superfluous ; and what was given us for our pleasure we pervert to a torment.

It is not necessary to specify the several objects I allude to : I mean whatever is the end of our pursuits, affections, passions, and desires. Whether love or friendship, fame, place or power, or whatever else may be the subject, the rule is still the same. While either hope or desire, can be reasonably exercised, we follow our happiness in the paths that nature has pointed

out to us ; but when hope is cut off, our pursuits are madness ; and when desire can no longer be gratified, the indulgence of it is folly.

These speculations, you will say, are easy, and the charge may be just ; but is it so easy to overcome an attachment which is grown into habit, and has been confirmed by time ? Certainly I answer, there can be no difficulty in doing what nature intended we should do.—Were it unnatural it might be difficult. Our love of life lasts as long as life itself, because it was so long necessary for the preservation of our being ; yet this love of life cannot possibly survive its object, and that is the general law which nature has given to all our attachments. She never meant that they should last longer than the transient subjects that occasioned them ; and if she never meant it, it cannot be difficult for us to act in conformity to her original purposes.

It is generally a disposition to act contrary to nature which occasions our misery in this, as well as in almost every other respect. It is from her bounty we derive the objects of enjoyment ; but with this we are not satisfied ; we want to prescribe the terms and the duration of that enjoyment ourselves. When she has lent us the

play-things of pleasure for our amusement, like children, we cannot part with them without petulance and tears. No ; it must be the last bauble, or nothing. In vain she offers us something else—She has taken the bells from us ; and the whistle she holds out to us, we snatch and dash it to the ground.

Thus we act like children, and it is like children we suffer. Could we but persuade ourselves quietly to give up one toy, and take another, how much misery occasioned by obstinacy and absurdity might we avoid !

It would, moreover, be no very ineffectual means of inducing us to part unreluctantly with what we have enjoyed, if we should then begin to view the object in the most unfavorable light. Nothing more probable than that we should find it a toy ! We often admire without attention, or the exercise of reason ; and it is necessary we should ; for were we to examine minutely every object that should engage our affections, or exercise our desires, we should find so much weakness, such insignificant properties, or such contemptible qualities, that desire and affection would for ever be suspended, and we should languish

through life without enjoyment or delight. Then is the time to look upon an object in the least favourable point of view, when it is gone from us, and would carry our hearts along with it—While it lasts, let us for our own sakes, always contemplate it in the most agreeable light ; let us cast a shade over its imperfections, and cherish in our imagination those pleasing qualities, whether real or ideal, that first drew us towards it.

This is a very profitable, and a very pardonable theft of happiness ; a species of self-deception, which ought, by all means, to be encouraged, because it soothes the mind without corrupting it.

There are some species of self-deception, which it may be dangerous to indulge. The cause of social virtue may suffer where it becomes the support of inequitable principles ; but where it is admitted only in ascribing imaginary perfections to the objects of our regard, it is productive of happiness without any moral inconvenience.

By this, then or by any other unexceptionable means, let us cherish our attachments while their objects are in our power. When they are

no longer so, let us withdraw the veil that hid their weakness from us, and when we see their imperfections, learn to be satisfied with their loss.

“ Ungrateful, and unfeeling *Waller* ! (at this moment exclaims the duchess of *M*—— :)
“ What, then, is there no tenderness due to the
“ memory of what has afforded us pleasure ?
“ shall we not bestow a sigh, a tear, upon the re-
“ membrance of what was dear to us ? How un-
“ naturally sage is such cold philosophy ! Nay,
“ how very ungrateful ! ” —

“ Ungrateful,” said your grace ? Ungrateful to whom, or to what ?

“ To those who, of all others, have the
“ greatest claim to our tenderness, to the dead ? ”

“ Ungrateful to the dead,” Madam ! Is it possible ? Do you suppose them to be attentive to our conduct ?

“ I see no reason why they should not be so.” But even supposing them to be mindful of the living, would they be offended at such a conduct as I have prescribed ? If they retained any real regard for us, would they not rejoice that we consulted our own happiness by every means in

our power ; even though it were by reflecting on their past foibles and frailties ? either this must be allowed, or it must be taken for granted that they are the same weak and vain creatures in their disembodied state that they were before.

* * * * *

A billet from lady C——

LETTER XV.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

How happy, my dear *St. Evremond*, are the true and dutiful children of philosophy! No sooner had I folded up my last letter, than I had occasion to practice the severest precepts I had been preaching—In happy expectation, I flew to lady *C's*, promising myself all that luxury of conversation which we find in the uninterrupted enjoyment of those we admire—She was utterly inaccessible—a crowd of coxcombs, had shut up every avenue. I had assurance enough to assume an air of gloom and dissatisfaction, at which I perceived she was piqued, though she affected to enjoy it—I made a short visit, and set my heart at ease with the following reflections: “How absurd (said I) to hope from so vain and so variable a creature as woman, any certainty of happiness, or enjoyment! The sentiments of that sex are so lightly taken up, and so superficially imprest, that they are dispersed and swept away by the slightest breath of chance. Their reason, if they have any (for even that has been disputed) is a vague, volatile, and flexible principle, whose office is never to direct their inclina-

“ tions, but to defend and apologise for them
 “ when pursued. Nature apparently intended
 “ them for little more than one purpose, and we
 “ foolishly put it in their power to plague us, by
 “ expecting more from them than they were
 “ meant to give.”

Do not you believe that after these reflections, my heart was at rest? Be assured that it was—I plainly perceived that lady C——had invited me purely to enjoy her own importance in my mortification. When I considered this, I pitied her weakness as much as I had indulged her vanity, and made them both together a motive for my repose.

My charming *Catullus*! my happy, my elegant philosopher! with what an interesting pleasure did I then recollect these thy beautiful lines.

*Miser Catulle, desinas ineptire !
 Et quod vides perisse, perditum ducas.
 Fulsero quondam candidi Tibi soles,
 Cum, ventitabas, qua Puella ducebat,
 Amata nobis, quantum amabitur nulla.
 Ibi illa multa tam jocosa fiebant
 Quæ Tu volebas, nec Puella nolebat.
 Fulsero vere candidi Tibi soles.
 Nunc jam illa non vult; Tu quoque impotens, noli,*

*Nec quæ fugit sectare ; nec miser vive :
Sed obstinata mente perfer, obdura ;
Vale Puella : jam Catullus obdurat.*

Nothing was ever more perfectly agreeable to my own sentiments—This, *St. Evremond*, is the very doctrine I have been preaching ; let us try how well it will sit upon myself.

Wretched *Waller* ! fool no more :
Give thy idle passion o'er :
Charming all that once might be,
Think it lost, if lost to thee.
Thine were paths bestrewed with flowers,
Golden suns, and smiling hours ;
When thy constant feet would stray
Along the love enchanted way ;
Led by her, that in thy heart
No nymph has left an equal part.
When each joy thy soul could share
Was snatched from no unwilling fair,
Thine were paths bestrewed with flowers,
Golden suns and smiling hours.
Now the nymph is kind no more,
Give thy idle passion o'er :
Why, inconstant if she be,
Should it make a wretch of thee ?
Tell her that her arts are vain,
Waller is himself again.

Nature had undoubtedly very wise ends in rendering that beautiful creature so very imperfect, and so deficient in all but personal accomplishments. Had the charms of the female mind borne any proportion to those of the female form, that idol alone would have engrossed our attention, and the other beauties of creation would have passed unnoticed—But nature, willing to be admired through the variety of her works, has thrown into each something that might dispose us to turn from it, and, after a short attention, to seek for new objects.

Thus, in the vegetable creation, many flowers that are adorned with the finest and most glowing colours, are either totally destitute of smell, or in some measure disagreeable. We admire their beauty, and pass from them to be relieved by the fragrance of others.

Nature is perfectly wise in all her dispensations, and it is our best wisdom to conform to her apparent purposes. Had she intended woman to be the sole object of man's attention, she would have given her qualities of power enough to fix his constant regard. But, from this she seems to have had views entirely different. She has given so much levity and vanity, so much

fickleness and inconsistency, such a wandering head, and such a trifling spirit, to the female character, that she certainly never meant so variable a creature to be the object of an invincible attachment.—Such are my present sentiments, and I find that they are of no little use to me.

LETTER XVI.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

YOU and *De l'Enclos* are the most extraordinary philosophers I ever knew. You do not confine yourselves to the rules of former sages, nor indeed to any rules at all. You make your own laws *ex post facto*. You pursue devoutly your inclinations. If they are gratified, all is well : It is upon the principles of nature that you act ; and, for living agreeably to her dictates, she rewards you with enjoyment. If they are deluded, though then, perhaps, all is not so well, yet you will range through the whole moral and natural world to account for the disappointment. Your search is not in vain. You never fail to find the cause in nature. Certain imperfections she left in her works, for very wise purposes. You must be perfectly reconciled to her administration ; for you find your happiness in following her precepts !

An excellent philosophy this, and perfectly convenient ! it removes every subject of self-reproach, and all the moral causes of discontent vanish into nothing. You sit serene beneath the banners of wisdom and rectitude. Reason, pru-

dence, and propriety charge you with no transgressions—Your hopes and desires always move within the circle described by truth and nature. You are always, therefore, in your own opinion, entitled to what you enjoy, and by this commodious philosophy you are reconciled to what escapes you.

That these may be very convenient principles, I will not deny; but their truth, I apprehend, and even their justice, must, frequently, be disputable.

Against their truth, it must be alledged, that to refer moral inconveniencies to natural causes would consequently lead us to charge nature with all the evils and irregularities that the folly or depravity of man might bring upon him, and in many cases, with the breach of her own obvious laws, which would be absurd.

With respect to their justice, it must be frequently problematical; for as it is one of your first principles to remove every shadow of error from your own conduct, it will follow as a general consequence, that you will not be too tender in your opinion of others; and thus, either nature, or the works of nature, or both, will suffer from the imputation.

Asto your *Un-Waller-like* treatment of the ladies, I must tell you that I had put on shield and buckler to step forth their redoubted knight, but *Bouillon* vowed she was able to encounter so puny a *Paynim* herself, and you may therefore prepare to meet her lance.

LETTER XVII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

I SEND you the inclosed without the least compassion for you : you have deserved a more severe chastisement, and you will be too much honored in falling by so distinguished a hand.

*Advenit qui vestra dies muliebribus armis
Verba redarguerit. Nomen tamen haud leve Patrum
Manibus hoc referes, telo cecidisse CAMILLÆ !*

MADAM DE BOUILLON TO MR. WALLER.

I HAVE the pleasure of being obliged to Mr. Waller for a more agreeable opinion both of myself and of my whole sex, than I have ever before dared to entertain. *St. Evremond*, either to gratify his own spleen, or to excite mine, shewed me a letter, which, but for certain circumstances, I could never have believed to be written by the gallant Mr. W——. The unmerciful censures in that invidious letter, thrown indiscriminately on the whole female world, awakened, I must confess, my keenest resentment. What! said I, are we then such weak, such insignificant creatures, born for no purpose but the lowest of all purposes? The

disdain I this moment feel at my soul, tells me that the charge is not less groundless than malicious. For no nobler purpose than ———. But you shall find, *Waller*, that I can be cool; and that a woman has fortitude enough to repel an injurious attack with calmness.

If Nature intended us for nothing more than the preservation of her favourite boys, why did she give us any other powers than such as were necessary merely for that end?—but, you will say, she has *not* given us any other—You dispute with us even the privilege of reason——O blindness of prejudice! Vain and arrogant partiality! What is reason but the power of distinguishing right from wrong, the capacity of drawing just conclusions from known principles? And will you dare to deny that we have this power? Let the noble instances of rectitude, virtue, and intrepidity; let the shining powers of mind, the fire of genius, the delicacy of taste, the vivacity of penetration, and the clearness of understanding, that have distinguished numbers of illustrious women, make you think of your censure with silent blushes!—Shall I mention the several characters which at once occur to my memory? No, Sir, I will not pay so ill a compliment to yours.

But if, after all, you should have charity enough to allow us this same faculty of reason, it must not be without limitations—Limitations almost as disgraceful as the total exclusion of it ! “ The reason of a woman is a flexible principle, whose office is never to direct her inclinations, but to defend them when pursued.” I wish, with all my heart, *Waller*, that this were less the condition of human reason in general ; but that it is more particularly so with the female world, I believe no candid observer of characters will allow. Are many of us remarkable for absurdities, for levities, inconsistencies and insignificant pursuits ? Let it be supposed—But have not you, too, your Wrong-heads, your insipid Triflers, your fickle and frivolous characters ? Though a woman should make use of her reason to defend her follies, is she therefore more despicable, or more ridiculous than he whose conduct is equally exceptionable, but who has not modesty or ingenuity sufficient to apologize for it ? Are we destitute of virtue ? You will not dare to say it—And are you not philosopher enough to know, that virtue is the effect of reason ? If virtue be the effect of reason, and if women are not destitute of virtue, neither can they be destitute of reason ; of

reason in its utmost perfection; for it is that alone which is productive of virtue.

But “we are vain and variable!” Thanks to that unbounded adulation of yours, and that fickle disposition to which we owe both these qualities! It is to your dissimulation, or your servility, or both, that we are indebted for the greatest part of our vanity: and you know too well your passion for variety, to be ignorant of the motives why we are given to change.

It is this necessity we find of assuming different appearances, and of varying our conduct in compliance with your taste, that has furnished you with your curiously-careless observation, that “our sentiments are lightly taken up, and “superficially imprest.” We can think, Sir, with as much depth, as much firmness and solidity, as any MASCULINE MIND—but what a superficial observer must you be, who could not at once see into the reasons you give us for this variety of sentiment, as well as of conduct?—Be ingenuous, *Waller*! be frank and constant; and the woman who shall treat you with levity, will deserve your reproaches.

I cannot help thinking that you and your friend *Catullus* are like two truant school boys, who, af-

ter they have been properly chastised, affect to laugh and play upon their punishment, but always return to their master with fear and trembling.

Nothing so fine as your speculative allusions to the œconomy of nature! Nothing so slight, or so soon blown away! Gently—thou curious texture, let me behold thy delicate frame!—Hold! 'Tis gone, like the Gossamer! Gone forever! and not a film remaining!

LETTER XVIII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

You have used me cruelly, in not introducing me sooner to the acquaintance of Mr. *Cowley*. To find, at my time of life, that there is a pleasure which I might have enjoyed for some years, is a very mortifying thing. I am sensible of this loss. Mr. *Cowley* has convinced me, that I had an affection, which wanted only to be called forth and exercised, to add to my stock of happiness. He has taught me to love him, or rather to love something that is in his genius and turn of mind, with a degree of sensibility that is very delightful to me. His pleasant, easy manners, the enthusiasm of his fancy, the luxuriancy of his imagination, have a certain charm in them, which seems to communicate itself by sympathy. When he speaks of rural life, and the retired enjoyment of nature, he carries me, without reluctance into the scenes that he describes; and though I know from experience, that I could not live two whole days in the country, I wonder, for the time, that I should live any where else. Mr. *Cowley's* love of nature appears so perfectly unaffected, that it creates a kind of reverence for him. It inspires one with something like those

sensations, which we may suppose the ancient poets felt, when they believed and described the existance of Genii and tutelary powers in the several departments of nature.—Let me ask you if you have not often regretted the loss of that doctrine. I am not ashamed to own, that I have lamented the abolition of it with great sincerity. Could any thing be more delightfully affecting, more calculated to inspire a noble and dignifying enthusiasm, than thus to walk with Gods?—To see nature full of divinities?—Nothing thus is inanimate or uninteresting. Every grove, every river has its consequence, when accompanied with the idea of its peculiar deity. How much must it have heightened the fancy, and harmonized the numbers of the poet, when he could suppose himself attended by listening *Dryads*, by *Naiads* that had left their fountains to hear the music of his lays; perhaps by *Apollo* himself, the God of Melody and Fancy, habited like some shepherd, or some wandering herdsman!—I am sincerely sorry for the loss of this theology!

LETTER XIX.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

It would have given me pleasure to have been of your party with Mr. Cowley. Nothing could have entertained me more than the raptures you expressed on the idea of retirement. I know you both, and am satisfied that the world has not two men it who are so little capable of living alone. You, indeed, acknowledge it; but poor Cowley has my compassion. He mistakes the chagrin of disappointment for an aversion to public life; and I grieve to think, that he must find himself unhappy in the mistake. I have observed, that men who have the greatest resources in themselves are the least able to live in solitude.* It is

* [*Milton thought that "solitude is sometimes best society," and Cicero, indulging in one of those conceits which he was fond of displaying, declared himself to be "nunquam minus solus quam cum solus." But the generality of readers, it is presumed, will prefer the candid confession of Balsac, and say, "Que la solitude est certainement une belle chose, mais il y a plaisir d'avoir quelqu'un à qui on puisse dire de tems en tems que la solitude est une belle chose." Note to the American edition.*]

not difficult to account for this. It is owing to an excess of sentiment. Evacuation is as necessary in the mental as in the corporal functions. A mind that overflows with ideas, if it wants the accustomed means of communication, will languish and find itself opprest. Books are of no great service in this respect. They pour in fresh supplies, and draw but little off. Something, indeed, may be spent in reflection ; but that is a kind of discharge, which, like the ebbing tide, goes off to return with the same force and fullness. The pen is the only relief in such situations as these. The great *Raleigh* found it so during his infamous imprisonment. Had he been capable of bearing solitude, we should probably never have seen his *History of the World*. But no man can write always. It is a severe kind of exercise, which will not fail to weaken the mind, if taken too frequently, or too long. Therefore, where retirement becomes an object of necessity rather than of choice, which, to the shame of the world be it spoken, is the case with Mr. *Cowley* ; it were to be wished, as you observe, that the ancient theology could be revived, and that there were a possibility of conversing with ideal beings. I fancy that you, who are a true *Catholic*, might without much diffi-

culty, reconcile this doctrine to orthodoxy and right faith. I often think, that the subaltern deities in the Heathen Bible were considered only as so many symbols of the attributes of the Universal Parent. Thus *Ceres*, *Flora*, and *Pomona*, with the rest of that tribe, represent his beneficence in its various operations. *Pan*, *Pales*, *Sylvanus* and their associate powers, impersonate his providential care in the animal and vegetable creation. In short, it seems to me, that you may recall, without impropriety, this enthusiasm of antiquity, and that in all your excursions you may walk with God !

LETTER XX.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

IT is with me as with those unhappy debtors, who, when they have no hope of retrieving their affairs, discover their distress to their creditors, and bid them, in despair, take the little that is left—Time has a long account against me, and, now that I have nothing left worth holding, I am willing to settle with him—O *Waller* ! I have lived too long—I have survived myself—She is gone—that elegant, that enchanting woman is gone for ever—those lips that never opened without pouring persuasion into the soul ; that smiled into such meanings as no language could express—Merciful God ! they are silent, senseless—I saw them quiver in the agonies of death ; and then, even then, when her eye was half raised to meet mine, a tremulous smile hung upon them for a moment—That was the last sign of sensibility, and in a moment more she expired, in such a manner as an angel may be imagined to fall asleep.—I am very sick of this world. Nothing that is good, or valuable, will live in it. I find myself alone, in the midst of a vast, unfeeling, regardless circle of beings, with whom

I have no mutuality of interest or concern. Every thing around me seems to have lost its consequence. My hopes and desires, my very will itself—all are in a state of suspension; and those things which used to give me pleasure by exciting my attention, are now perfectly indifferent to me. Even the faculty of speech seems to have forsaken me, and if I have any indulgence left, it is in a kind of *sombre* silence.

*Et, cessant de parler, je remets a mes pleurs
Le soin de faire voir l'exces de mes douleurs.
Dans un lieu frequente, dans un lieu solitaire,
Le plus aimable objet ne fait que me deplaire;
Insensible toujours aux clartes du soliel,
Plus insensible encore aux douseurs de sommeil.*

I knew not that my happiness so totally depended on the object I have lost. I suspected not that she was so necessary to my peace, to my very existence—'Tis true, I loved her; but how unpardonable was that ignorance!—I ought to have known the consequences of losing her before I felt them—I should then have formed a truer estimate of her importance to me—How painful is the anguish of too late a gratitude!—How wretched to be for ever learning what we should for ever know!

LETTER XXI.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

Is poor *Mazarin*, then, no more? Escaped at last from the malice of her fate!—Good Heaven! that the most beautiful and most agreeable objects in the creation should thus suffer, and perish! How has the fell satyr, MISFORTUNE, pursued that fair and amiable woman, from her very entrance into the World!—And has the chace, then, only ended in the grave? Alas! my *St. Evremond*, I feel for you, for myself, for human Nature.—But—let us change our grief into indignation—let us remember, that this loved, lamented victim fell at the shrine of SUPERSTITION*, and pour our heaviest curses on her detested head—join me, *St Evremond*!—Lend me your assisting hand, and we will crush her into atoms—let us pursue her through all her horrid haunts, her dismal retreats—the injured Ghost

* *The superstition of the Duke De Mazarin, and the ridiculous circumstances of his fanatical conduct, rendered it impossible for a woman of the Duchess's spirit and temper to live with him. Unhappily, however, she had no alternative, but to starve without him.—Yet she preferred even that to slavery, and the debasement of the mind. Mr. De St. Evremond was among those who contributed to her support in England.*

of *Mazarin* shall lead the way, and scare her from the meditated task of murder.

There is a superfluous kind of generosity peculiar to liberal spirits, which makes them, upon the loss of those who were dear to them, lament that they have been deficient in friendship or in kindness. This I find, is among the things that afflict you ; but this is a superstition of the moral kind, which you must not indulge. I know that Madam *Mazarin* had the greatest obligations to your friendship. You enlivened her unhappy fortunes with your good humour ; you mitigated them with your philosophy ; you relieved them out of an income hardly sufficient for yourself. Remember these things, and the reflections which now give you pain will bring very different sentiments along with them. The idea of *Mazarin* will be accompanied by a pensive, but pleasing tenderness, which, though it may bear the name of sorrow, you will be unwilling to part with. There is a kind of luxury in lamenting the death of those we have loved. Our affections themselves supply the place of their object. We enjoy the exercise of them again ; and thus there is a period of mourning that has its charms.

LETTER XXII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

I REMEMBER to have been much pleased in my youth with a design and motto of the Duke of *Florence*. The emblem was a fine spreading tree, full of innumerable thriving and flowery branches: the device,

—*Primo avulso, non deficit alter Aureus.*

The long succession of that illustrious house, the idea of being communicated through a series of descendants, and renewing life only in different forms, gave occasion to many pleasing and flattering reflections—Alas! *St. Evremond*, they were the dreams of young and unmortified hope. Now, when I want them most, they have the least weight with me. I shall, indeed, leave children behind me, branches that spring up from the decayed stock of the body—But, the incommunicable mind—Of that I find no traces in those who are to follow me. They may, possibly, bear my name to the distance of a few centuries; during which time it may acquire the appendages of every infirmity in human nature; be stigmatized with dishonesty, vanity, and stupidity!

Yet how unaccountably prevalent is the fondness of preserving a family name! Could we im-

press the features of the soul ; could we, like the *Grecian* architect, give some internal character that might be a lasting honour to us, this ambition would have some shadow of reason for its support. But I find myself, and I believe the greatest part of those who are most strongly bent on this method of preserving a name, to be in the same circumstances with *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, when he built his celebrated *Pharos*. His principal intention was, that this building should convey his memory to the remotest posterity ; and therefore that future times might have no motives to destroy it, he took care that it should be of public utility, and serve both as a land mark and as a light to all that used those seas. The ambition of the Prince, however, was defeated by the cunning of the architect. The name of *Ptolemy* was cut upon a thin shell, behind which was artfully concealed a solid square of white marble, with the following inscription :
“ *Sostratus of Gnidos, the son of Dexiphanes ;*
“ to the Gods Protectors, for the safeguard of
“ sailors ” Time did justice to the artist, and brought him to the enjoyment of his proper fame. It is this fame only that a reasonable man should make his object. The passion of conveying a name through a series of generations is ridiculous even in those who have no merit to make themselves remembered.

LETTER XXIII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

I AM much afflicted with what you tell me, concerning the death of *De Neuville* : for though I have not seen him these many years, I believe he once had a regard for me, and I must, therefore, bear a tenderness to his memory. The worst losses we sustain, are in the death of those that love us. Every kind sentiment in our favour is a treasure of the greatest value : It is the approbation of a rational being, and is the most pardonable kind of flattery in which we can indulge ourselves. The desire of having many friends, in all the extent and confidence of the idea, would be followed by great inconveniences ; but to wish for the esteem, or even the love, of many people, has nothing unreasonable in it. There are moral advantages to be derived from it. Every one, whose esteem or affection is of consequence to us, becomes, on that account, a guardian of our virtue. To such we voluntarily make ourselves answerable for our conduct, and our caution will always be in proportion to the esteem we suppose ourselves to possess. I would not have this idea extended to that populari-

ty which is pursued, and sometimes obtained, by men of courtly talents and public appointments. Favour, like every thing else, when it grows common, loses its consequence. Its moral influence, at least, no longer remains; for though the esteem of individuals makes us careful to preserve that virtue that attained it, popularity has no such effect. There is something uninteresting, or something intoxicating; something that infatuates, or something that cloyes in the possession of public favour. Those who enjoy it most, are never solicitous to hold it long. From the slightest motives, and frequently from none, they act in opposition to those very principles, which procured them the applause of their fellow citizens*. If it should fare with poets, then as with politicians, popular admiration would be no desirable thing. Indeed, there are few minds that are capable of sustaining it as they ought. The cordial esteem of one private friend is more valuable, because less dangerous, than the loudest echoes of public applause. If those praises are heard, they are seldom heard with safety.

* *Had Mr. Waller lived nearer our own times, he would not have found it so difficult to account for the change of conduct in popular patriots.*

They are apt to destroy that equanimity which is the support of wisdom and virtue. Believe me, *St. Evremond*, were I always sure of enjoying the approbation of a few such friends as yourself, I should think that share of reputation alone sufficient. But death and fortune have used me cruelly in that respect.

LETTER XXIV.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

I AM almost persuaded to think with the philosopher of *Chatsworth*, that it is a right thing to avoid reading—Not from the fear of having my own sentiments adulterated by the introduction of others: I have no affectation of that kind. But where is the page that is not full of the follies and miseries of men? Whoever goes into a library, finds himself in the same circumstances with *Aeneas* amongst the pictures at *Carthage*. The *Lacrymæ Rerum* occur to him every where. If he opens a book, he is presented with the history of human misfortunes, perhaps with his own. The annals of later times are so filled with death and ruin, that I pass over them with the fears of a child, that thinks of ghosts and spectres as it wanders through the dark. The image of some brave friend still starts up before me, points to his bleeding wounds, and bids me curse the rage of faction and ambition. Oh *Waller*! what destruction of the human species have you and I lived to behold!—What havock of our contemporaries, of our friends!—Of what miserable times do we stand the melancholy monuments! The storm that tore up the forest still

left our solitary trunks unbroken!—To what purpose?—To drop the tears of pity and anguish on the ruins that lie beneath us!

The conclusion of your last brought before me all that I had suffered in the destruction of my friends. I laboured to oppose the growing reflections—I took up an ancient author—Merciful God! the book opened at the following passage:—*Accipe, mi Commilito;—ede; non enim tibi gladium præbeo, sed panem—Accipe rursum et bibe; non enim tibi scutum, sed poculum trado: ut sive tu me interficias, sive ego te, moriamur facilius: atque ut ne me enervata atque imbecilla manu occidas, aut ego te. Hæ nostræ sunt exequiæ, nobis adhuc viventibus.* He who can read this with dry eyes—He who can think of it without execrating the authors of civil dissensions, cannot bear the heart of a man in his bosom. I need not tell you that this is recorded in the life of *Vitellius*. When in the civil wars between that prince and *Vespasian*, the army of the former was supplied with provisions by their women, they conveyed part of them by night into the camp of *Vespasian*, to refresh their countrymen, whom they were to fight the following day. The manner in which they deliver them, the language they use to remove their apprehensions, is more affecting than any thing I

ever met with of the kind : “ Take this, fellow-
“ soldier, and eat it—’tis not my sword I put
“ towards you, it is bread—This, too, take and
“ drink it---It is not my shield I am holding out to
“ you ; it is a cup. Whether you fall by my hand,
“ or I by yours, this refreshment will make death
“ more easy. It will strengthen the arm that
“ gives the decisive blow, and we shall not die
“ slowly by a feeble wound. These, fellow-soldi-
“ ers, are the only funeral rights we shall have.
“ Let us thus celebrate them while we live.”

In what a detestable light do those wretches appear, whose competitions could lead these brave and merciful men to the slaughter of each other ! Surely some curse of peculiar bitterness is reserved for those diabolical spirits, who, for private gratifications, break the bonds of society ! Is there no place of punishment for these demons ? I would sooner believe there is no heaven for the virtuous.

LETTER XXV.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

CROMWEL once observed to me, when we were lamenting the loss of some brave men, who had fallen in the civil wars, that it was the property of God to bring good out of evil, man might sometimes be unblameably instrumental in doing that evil for the production of the ensuing good. I am sensible, added he, that *St. Paul* speaks somewhat differently on this subject, but he does not seem to have intended that his precept should affect political matters. It is thus that the disturbers of society reason, when they want to effect their purposes by pernicious means. *Cromwel* was certainly a great man, an able negociator, a deep politician ; but without ingenuity, without humanity, without any affection for truth or honour, he made use of the worst and cruelest of all political engines, fanaticism. I have often been astonished at his command of face, and expression of sanctity, when he listened to the vilest nonsense that ever tortured the ear of a rational creature. Not one look, or glance or feature, bore any marks of that contempt which he felt at his heart. It seemed to me that he had two souls, one directing his

countenance, attitude and motion; the other, more retired, charged with his proper and private sentiments; one that secretly planned and watched over the deep laid schemes of political ambition; another that received its orders from within, and went through the external drudgery of carrying those schemes into execution.—I received many favours from him, partly because I had the honour to be related to him, and partly on account of the panegyric I wrote upon him—I must therefore beg for some indulgence to his memory.—Save, at least, one of his souls, the pious and innocent subaltern, that was employed in prayers and praises! that waited for the Lord, and would rebuke him for his delay! that lay violent hands upon the throne of grace, and cried come, come quickly!—Surely, *St. Eremond*, this soul should be saved: the other we must give up to the allotment of your demons.

LETTER XXVI.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

NO, MY *St. Evremond*, it is time to close the idle pursuits of poetry. I am now descending from the little eminence of life, and must soon drop into these dark, unfathomed waters that lie at the bottom.—The impressions of fancy are never indulged without danger. They leave the mind in a fluctuating and unsettled state. They withdraw its attention from fixed principles and points of view. They confuse its clear and simple lights, by mingling them with shadows and fantastic appearances. Are such circumstances proper for declining years?—where all should be steady, consistent, and uniform—where we should tread only on the firm ground of philosophy—shall we step aside like children to gather flowers? Believe me, *St. Evremond*, to pay a serious court to the muses would now be as absurd, as it would be to address any other mistress on the same terms. The attempt would be equally fruitless and ridiculous :

*The muse that caught from Sidney's eyes her fire,
In Sidney's ashes felt the flame expire.*

Poetical ground, like every other soil, becomes

barren and unfruitful by too long exercise. There is a period in life beyond which poets, in particular, ought not to think of writing. Fancy is not the guest of age; and therefore, old men rarely succeed in works of nature. Those depend principally on enthusiasm; and that is, almost peculiarly, the growth of young and vigorous minds. We grow cold to the love of that nature, after a long acquaintance with her, and it is that love to which poetical enthusiasm owes its very existence. Nor is it easy to substitute any thing of equal energy in its place. It is not many years since I attempted some poems on divine subjects, thinking those most suited to my age and condition. But I cannot boast of success, not even of satisfaction in those performances. They may be pleasing to devout minds; but there is something wanting. It is the *Vis Ingenii*, the vigour of imagination and expression that has failed. You will consider these frank acknowledgments as an unanswerable apology for the silence of what you call *my muses*. Yours are of a more elastic kind; and, like the nymphs of your country, they will dance till they die.

LETTER XXVII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

It was usual, I think, among the ancient *Hebrews*, when they had passed the period of sixty, to make a feast for their friends, and sing the songs of *Sion*. There was something truly rational and philosophical in this cheerful custom. It was the natural tribute of good sense and gratitude. A people who believed the mortality of their existence, could not but look upon the prolongation of it as an effect of the divine benevolence, and every testimony of their joy was, on that principle, an act of religion.—What is the reason that we have conceived such very different ideas of the proper deportment of age? We have imposed upon it a gravity of manners, and a severity of studies. We add to the weights that time hangs upon that period. The lighter amusements are deemed improper, and the indulgence of fancy must be utterly excluded.—I own I am unable to discover the wisdom, or even the propriety of this.—What because I have the promise but of a few years before I must be locked up in the grave, is the work of death to begin already? Shall it not be left to nature? Am I to die through my best parts and faculties before she gives the summons? Must I now part with

my vivacity, my fancy?—shut up every source of amusement, because they must infallibly be taken from me at last! Is it the art of accommodation I am to learn? Is any art necessary for sleeping in the grave? Were it so, the cave of *Trophonius* would, indeed, be a proper school. But if my sleep will be the same, whether I am called from thence, or beckoned from the circle of the muses and the graces, I cannot entertain a doubt to which of those scenes my proper happiness should lead me. I have always admired the death of *Buchanan*. He was willing to go to rest with agreeable ideas, and therefore retained to the last the image of that object, which in life, had given him the greatest pleasure,

*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis
Contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.*

With that couplet of *Propertius* he closed the scene; and, though his death was more poetical than pious, he certainly was right in his first principle. To what purpose, *Waller*, should we affect a cold and sombrous gravity of temper? Our little fires will too soon be extinguished. Let us stir up and brighten the dying embers. We may not strike the lyre with the vivacity of youth, but we may yet call from it some soothing notes to divert the idea of eternal silence.

LETTER XXVIII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

IF there should be no greater impropriety in giving the faculty of speech to the vegetable than to the animal creation, many fine morals, I think, might be drawn from fables designed in that part of nature. For my own part, I am fond of animating every thing around me; and there is hardly a tree or flower of any note in my garden, which is not, in my idea, invested with some peculiar design or quality; which has not some relative interest, consequence, or pursuit. It was under the influence of this kind of fancy, that the following little piece was written; which may not improperly be called *The Lady's Moral*.

THE TULIP AND THE MYRTLE.

I.

'Twas on the border of a stream
A gaily-painted Tulip stood,
And gilded by the morning beam,
Surveyed her beauties in the flood.

II.

And sure, more lovely to behold,
Might nothing meet the wistful eye,

Than crimson fading into gold
In streaks of fairest symmetry.

III.

The beauteous flower, with pride elate,
Ah me! that pride with beauty dwells!
Vainly affects superior state,
And thus in empty fancy swells

IV.

“ O lustre of unrivalled bloom!
“ Fair painting of a hand divine!
“ Superior far to mortal doom,
“ The hues of Heaven alone are mine!

V.

“ Away, ye worthless, formless race!
“ Ye weeds that boast the name of flowers!
“ No more my native bed disgrace,
“ Unmeet for tribes so mean as yours!

VI.

“ Shall the bright daughter of the sun,
“ Associate with the shrubs of earth?
“ Ye slaves, your sovereign's presence shun!
“ Respect her beauties and her birth.

VII.

“ And thou, dull, sullen ever-green!
 “ Shalt thou my shining sphere invade?
 “ My noon-day beauties beam unseen,
 “ Obscured beneath thy dusky shade!

VIII.

“ Deluded flower!” the Myrtle cries,
 “ Shall we thy moment’s bloom adore?
 “ The meanest shrub that you despise,
 “ The meanest flower has merit more.

IX.

“ That daisy, in its simple bloom,
 “ Shall last along the changing year;
 “ Blush on the snow of Winter’s gloom,
 “ And bid the smiling Spring appear.

X.

“ The violet, that, those banks beneath,
 “ Hides from thy scorn its modest head,
 “ Shall fill the air with fragrant breath,
 “ When thou art in thy dusty bed.

XI.

“ Ev’n I, who boast no golden shade.
 “ Am of no shining tints possest,
 “ When low thy lucid form is laid,
 “ Shall bloom on many a lovely breast.

XII.

“ And he, whose kind and fostering care
“ To thee, to me, our beings gave,
“ Shall near his breast my flowrets wear,
“ And walk regardless o’er thy grave.

XIII.

“ Deluded flower ! the friendly screen
“ That hides thee from the noon-tide ray,
“ And mocks thy passion to be seen,
“ Prolongs thy transitory day.

XIV.

“ But kindly deeds with scorn repaid,
“ No more by virtue need be done :
“ I now withdraw my dusky shade,
“ And yield thee to thy darling Sun.

XV.

Fierce on the flower the scorching beam
With all its weight of glory fell ;
The flower exulting caught the gleam,
And lent its leaves a bolder swell.

XVI.

Expanded by the searching fire,
The curling leaves the breast disclos’d ;

The mantling bloom was painted higher,
And ev'ry latent charm expos'd.

XVII.

But when the Sun was sliding low,
And ev'ning came, with dew's so cold;
The wanton beauty ceas'd to blow,
And sought her bending leaves to fold.

XVIII.

Those leaves, alas, no more would close;
Relax'd, exhausted, sickening, pale;
They left her to a parent's woes,
And fled before the rising gale.

I think there cannot be any great impropriety in the indulgence of poetical amusements of this *moral* nature, even at my far advanced time of life. You found some difficulty, notwithstanding, to bring me over to this opinion; and I cannot yet think that an old man can spend his time very properly in what you call the circle of the muses and the graces. There is one *John Milton*, an old commonwealth's man, who hath in the latter part of his life, written a poem intituled *Paradise Lost*; and to say the truth, it is not without some fancy and bold invention. But I am much better pleased with some smaller produc-

tions of his in the scenical and pastoral way;
one of which called *Lycidas*, I shall herewith
send you, that you may have some amends for
the trouble of reading this bad poetry.

LETTER XXIX.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

I THANK you for your vegetable fable, and have long thought as you do, that a very beautiful collection of moral poems of the same kind might be drawn from that part of nature. The enthusiasm that would be excited by the scenery in general, and the pleasure which might arise from the minuter beauties of description, would give to compositions of this sort many evident advantages. Nature is a much better moralist than *Seneca* or *Epictetus*, and gives her lessons both more agreeably and more effectually.

The poem called *Lycidas*, which you say is written by Mr. *Milton*, has given me much pleasure. It has in it what I conceive to be the true spirit of pastoral poetry, the old *Arcadian* enthusiasm. Your *English* poets have been strangely mistaken, when they have thought it possible to accomodate the genius of this poetry to the inelegant simplicity of your clowns. Your *Spenser*, in other respects an agreeable painter of nature, is, in his rustic pastorals, insupportable. It is not to be denied, however, that *Theocritus* is, in some places, quite as vile as *Spenser*, and *Virgil* almost

as vile as *Theocritus*. But the latter, I think, seems to have written beneath the dignity of poetry with reluctance. The language of his taste was always,

——*Sylvæ sint consule dignæ!*

But his reverence for his model led him into an imitation of his defects.

The great error seems to have arisen from an inattention to this doctrine, that every species of poetry is under the patronage of the Graces. How the *Greeks* should, at any time, forget this, is somewhat difficult to account for; as the Muses and the Graces are with them, very often, synonymous terms, and their word *Charites* is used indifferently for either. Yet it is certain that some of their best poets have frequently forgotten in whose Temple they were worshipping.

It is not the most unadorned simplicity that is improper in any species of pastoral composition; for simplicity is the ground of every thing that is graceful. It is the introduction of objects or ideas that are in themselves low and inelegant, which spoils the beauty of pastoral imagery. Taste is always attended with a peculiar delicacy, and will be disgusted with every work of art where that is wanting.

But if your *Spenser* is too gross, your *Dryden* is too trim, and too full of low conceits in his pastoral scenery. Nothing can be a stronger proof of this than the following couplet,

*For thee, gay Month, the groves green liveries wear,
If not the first, the fairest of the year.*

It is hardly possible to conceive any thing more contemptible than the idea of dressing the woods in livery ; yet I doubt not that this couplet has had its admirers. Sure I am, that *Malherbe* has been praised for a thousand verses as vile.

Shall we praise the *Italian* pastoral ? how is it possible ? even the celebrated pastoral comedy of *Guarini* is, with all the profusion of genius, a most absurd performance. He is right in the locality of his piece ; but his great misfortune is, that love is not a local thing. Neither is it romantic ; though, by setting the ideas afloat, it sometimes gives people a turn to what we call the romantic. Neither will it bear to be bound up in allegory. We hate the very idea of Demi-Gods and Satyrs. Unless we held the religion that bred them, it would be impossible to consider them otherwise than in a farcical light. In the business of love, therefore, they will not go down, because love is a serious thing.

What pleases me in *John Milton's* poem, besides the true pastoral enthusiasm and the scenic merit, is the various and easy flow of its numbers. Those measures are well adapted to the tender kind of imagery, though they are not expressive of the first strong impressions of grief.

A little poem of this kind was lately put into my hands, which, as it has not been printed, I will transcribe for you.

A M O N O D Y

Inscribed to my worthy friend J. S. being written in his garden at Amwell, in Hertfordshire, the beginning of the year 1669.

I.

FRIEND of my genius! on whose natal hour,
Shone the same star, but shone with brighter
ray ;

Oft as amidst thy *Amwell's* Shades I stray,
And mark thy true taste in each winding bower,
From my full eye why fall's the tender shower?
While other thoughts than these fair scenes
convey,
Bear on my trembling mind, and melt its powers away.

II.

Ah me ! my friend ! in happier hours I spread
Like thee, the wild walk o'er the varied plain ;
The fairest tribes of *Flora's* painted train,
Each bolder shrub that grac'd her genial bed,
When old *Sylvanus*, by young wishes led,
Stole to her arms, of such fair offspring vain,
'That bore their mother's beauties on their
head.

III.

Like thee, inspired by love——'twas *Delia's*
charms,
'Twas *Delia's* taste the new creation gave :
For her my groves in plaintive sighs would
wave,
And call her absent to their master's arms.

IV.

She comes—ye flowers your fairest blooms un-
fold !
Ye waving groves, your plaintive sighs for-
bear !
Breathe all your fragrance to the amorous air,
Ye smiling shrubs whose heads are clothed with
gold !

V.

She comes, by Truth, by fair Affection led,
The long lov'd mistress of my faithful heart!
The mistress of my soul, no more to part,
And all my hopes, and all my vows are sped.
Vain, vain delusions! dreams for ever fled!
Ere twice the spring had waked the genial
hour,
The lovely parent bore one beauteous flower,
And drooped her gentle head,
And sunk, for ever sunk, into her silent bed.

VI.

Friend to my genius! Partner of my fate!
To equal sense of painful suffering born!
From whose fond breast a lovely parent torn,
Bedew'd thy pale cheek with a tear so late;—
Oh! let us mindful of the short, short date,
That bears the spoil of human hopes away,
Indulge sweet Memory of each happier day!
No! close, forever close the iron gate
Of cold oblivion on that dreary cell,
Where the pale shades of past enjoyments
dwell,
And pointing to their bleeding bosoms say,
On life's disastrous hour what varied woes a-
wait!

VII.

Let scenes of softer, gentler kind
Awake to Fancy's soothing call,
And milder on the pensive mind,
The shadowed thoughts of grief shall fall.
Oft as the slowly closing day
Draws her pale mantle from the dew stars eye,
What time, the shepherd's cry
Leads from the pastured hill his flocks away,
Attentive to the tender lay,
That steals from *Philomela's* breast,
Let us in musing silence stray,
Where LEE beholds in mazes slow
His uncomplaining waters flow,
And all his whispering shores invite the charm
of rest.

LETTER XXX.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

I WAS much pleased with a conversation, which I overheard a few days ago, between the King and an honest *Worcestershire* Baronet, who was lately elected for a borough in that county. The good-natured man came up to take his seat among us, and, as he lived in the neighbourhood of the royal oak, he supposed that he could not pay a better compliment to his majesty than by bringing him a branch of his old asylum. Who is that antique (said the king,) with a withered branch in his hand?——It is Sir *Thomas****, member for****.

The KING.

Sir *Thomas*, I am glad to see you : I hope you can give a good account of our friends in *Worcestershire*.

Sir THOMAS****.

I wish I could please your majesty ; but there is a blacksmith's wife——

The KING.

No matter for her——I enquired only after the health of your family,

Sir THOMAS.

Thank God! in good health—but this woman,
please your majesty—

The KING.

What of her?

Sir THOMAS.

—Has sworn a child to your majesty.

The KING.

I am glad of it—I do remember that I met a
woman, when I went a wood-cutting with farmer
Penderell.

Sir THOMAS.

A rosy complexion please your majesty.

The KING.

No matter! What is become of the woman
and her child?—

Sir THOMAS.

She is very well taken care of, please your
Majesty! The church-wardens are my tenants,
and I ordered them to allow her an upper sheet.

The KING.

Fye! Fye!

Sir THOMAS

Please your majesty, I was near losing my election by it. Some of that parish were freemen, and they said that I, as a magistrate, ought to have sent a warrant to your majesty, to give a bond to the Parish, or to pay ten pounds.

The KING.

Why did you not do your duty?

Sir THOMAS.

Because, please your majesty, I thought it my duty not to do it. Your majesty has been at a great expence of late.

The KING.

True; very true, Sir *Thomas*! What is that branch in your hand? Some token, I suppose, by which you hold your lands—

Sir THOMAS

No; 'tis something by which your majesty holds your lands—'tis a branch of that blessed Oak which preserved your majesty's precious life.

This is a wooden compliment ; but it is honest and I thank you for it—You have wit Sir *Thomas*, why do we not see you oftener at Court ?

Sir THOMAS.

I can do your majesty much more service in the country, by keeping up a spirit of loyalty and good will towards you amongst my neighbours.

The KING.

And how do you manage that point ?

Sir THOMAS

I give them beef, and bid them fall to without the long grace of the Roundheads. Then I give 'em strong beer, and they cry God bless your majesty.

The KING.

If that is the toast, Sir *Thomas*, you are the king ; and in truth, I think you govern with profound policy. Could I adopt the same measures, I should have much less trouble ; but there is no finding beef enough for that hungry circle which you see there.

S I R T H O M A S

God bless your majesty ! I have ten fat oxen in *Worcestershire* ; and nine of them are heartily at your majesty's service.

* * * * *

This bountiful offer of the honest baronet's made the king laugh so violently, that it put an end to the conversation. His majesty told us, with great good humour, what we had to expect, and added he that hoped every member of the house would be as ready to give as Sir *Thomas******, that he might be able to find wine for the feast. This is a measure which I will promote with all my power ; for the king's necessities are truly deplorable. Considering his extreme poverty, his good humor is astonishing. I believe there never was a prince at the same time so pleasant and so poor.

LETTER XXXI.

WALLER TO ST EVREMOND.

O VALES of *Penshurst*, now so long unseen !
Forgot each secret shade, each winding green ;
Those lonely paths what art have I to tread,
Where once young love the blind enthusiast led ?
Yet if the genius of your conscious groves
His *Sidney* in my *Sacharissa* loves ;
Let him with pride her cruel power unfold ;
By him my pains let *Evremond* be told.

The loves of THYRSIS and SACHARISSA.

Related by the Genius of Penshurst.

Whate'er hath met mine ear of tale or song,
Since he of *Arcady* first stole the reed
Of *Hermes*, and made every shepherd scorn
His evening slumbers, heedless have I heard,
Yet pity for the gentle *Thyrsis* drew
Me frequent from the mossy breast of sleep ;
And when beneath the cold moon's shadowy
light,
Like that fond bird which courteth silence best,
He thus complained harmonious, I have sighed,
And felt his sorrow through my depth of shades.

THYRSIS AT PENSHURST.

WHILE in the park I sing, the listening deer
 Attend my passion, and forget to fear.
 When to the beeches I report my flame
 They bow their heads as if they felt the same:
 To Gods appealing, when I reach their bowers
 With loud complaints, they answer me in show-
 ers.

To thee a wild and cruel soul is given,
 More deaf than trees, and prouder then the
 Heaven.

Love's foe profest, why dost thou falsely feign
 Thyself a *Sidney*! from which noble strain
 He sprung, that could so far exalt the name
 Of love, and warm our nation with his flame,
 That all we can of love, or high desire,
 Seems but the smoke of amorous *Sidney's* fire!

Not call her mother who so well does prove,
 One breast may hold both chastity and love.
 Never can she, that so exceeds the spring
 In joy and bounty, be supposed to bring
 One so destructive; to no human stock
 We owe this fierce unkindness, but the rock.
 That cloven rock produced thee, by whose side
 Nature, to recompense the fatal pride
 Of such stern beauty, placed these healing
 springs

Which no more help than that destruction brings.
Thy heart no ruder than the rugged stone,
I might, like *Orpheus*, with my numerous moan
Melt to compassion now my traitorous song
With thee conspires to do the singer wrong.
While thus I suffer not myself to lose
The memory of what augments my woes :
But with my own breath still foment the fire
Which flames as high as fancy can aspire.
This last complaint th' indulgent ears did pierce
Of just *Apollo*, president of verse ;
Highly concerned, that the muse should bring
Damage to one whom he had taught to sing ;
Thus he advised me ; on yon aged tree
Hang up thy lute, and hie thee to the sea,
That there with wonders thy diverted mind
Some truce at least may with this passion find.

Ah, cruel Nymph ! from whom her humble swain,
Flies for relief, unto the raging main ;
And from the winds and tempests does expect
A milder fate than from her cold neglect ;
Yet there he'll pray that the unkind may prove
Blest in her choice, and vows this endless love
Springs from no hope of what she can confer,
But from those gifts which heaven has heaped
on her.

Thus sung he plaintive and full sore I griev'd
That the fair mistress of these flowery plains,
Where love and nature triumphed, foe to love,
Tho' born of *Sidney's* race, in such high scorn
Should hold his gentle prayer; yet shepherd
cease

These vain complaints of cruelty, I cried,
And threats of rash despair: these only feed
The female pride; they soften not their hearts.
Would you succeed, let soothing blandishments
Of careless praise, as from a mind at ease,
That calls for no reward, invade their ear.
Eager they drink the golden draught that flows
From this unnoted source, and yield that love,
That rich reward, which first solicited,
Were harder to be won; for flattery fails not,
Save when her thin veil shews the hated form
Of selfish hope behind. Obedient thus
The swain resumed his song.

THYRSIS AT PENSURST.

HAD *Sacharissa* lived when mortals made
Choice of their deities, this sacred shade
Had held an altar to her power that gave
The peace and glory which these alleys have.

Embroidered so with flowers where she stood,
That it became a garden of a wood :
Her presence has such more than human grace
That it can civilize the rudest place :
And beauty too and order can impart,
Where nature ne'er intended it, nor art.
The plants acknowledge this and her admire
No less than those of old did *Orpheus's* lyre.
If she sit down, with tops all round her bowed ;
They round about her into arbours crowd ;
Or if she walk, in even ranks they stand
Like some well marshall'd, and obsequious band.
Amphion so made stones and timber leap
Into fair figures from a confused heap :
And in her symmetry of parts is found
A power, like that of harmony in sound.

Ye lofty beeches tell this matchless dame
That if together ye fed all one flame,
It could not equalize the hundredth part
Of what her eyes have kindled in my heart.
Go, boy, and carve this passion on the bark
Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred mark
Of noble *Sidney's* birth, when such benign,
Such more than mortal making stars did shine ;
That there they cannot but for ever prove
The monument and pledge of humble love :
His humble love, whose hope shall ne'er rise
 higher

Than for a pardon that he dares admire.

And did no smile, good *Thyrsis*, no kind look,
On these soft numbers fall?—O yes, more precious

Than all the treasures that the *Lydian* wave
Sweeps from his sands of gold; but coldly pleased,

These strains of art and fancy, she replied,
Fantastic minds amuse: they love the errors
That live in poets' creeds, their vain divinities,
And idle adorations; strange to me,
Who love no language but of truth and nature!
Yet, gentle *Thyrsis*, other hopes are thine.
This haughty fair the love of power may charm,
And yield her to thy wish; some other mistress,
Some object of a former flame must bleed
A victim on her altar—She must know
Must see the sacrifice, thyself unseen.
Unconscious that she finds the flattering bait.
Haste then, and leave it in these lonely walks,
Where oft she wanders, when the star of eve
Lights up the hour of love.

THYRSIS TO AMORET*.

FAIR, that you may truly know
What you unto *Thyrsis* owe;
I will tell you how I do
Sacharissa, love and you.

Joy salutes me when I set
My blest eyes on *Amoret*:
But with wonder I am struck,
When I on the other look.

If sweet *Amoret* complains,
I have sense of all her pains;

(*) *Lady Sophia Murray* is supposed to have been addressed by the name of *Amoret*, while the *Lady Dorothea Sidney*, daughter of the Earl of Leicester is celebrated under that of *Sacharissa*. The latter name is derived, as *Dr. Johnson* observes, in his cynical manner, from the Latin appellation of sugar, and implies, if it means any thing, a spiritless mildness, and dull good nature, such as excites rather tenderness than esteem, and such as, though always treated with kindness, is never honoured nor admired.

The poet, though he seems to have been a favorite of the *Muses* from his infancy, yet failed to move the heart of either of these ladies by the fascinations of his verse or the eagerness of his importunities. In her old age he met with *Sacharissa*, and being asked when he would again write such verses upon her, he replied "when you are as young, *Madam*, and as handsome as you then were."

[Note to the American edition.]

But for *Sacharissa* I
Do not only grieve, but die.

All that of myself is mine ;
Lovely *Amoret*, is thine ;
Sacharissa's captive fain
Would unite his iron chain ;
And those scorching beams to shun
To thy gentle shadow run.

If the soul had free election
To dispose of her affection,
I would not thus long have borne
Haughty *Sacharissa's* scorn :
But 'tis sure some power above,
Which controuls our will in love.

If not love, a strong desire
To create and spread that fire,
In my breast solicits me,
Beauteous *Amoret* for thee.

'Tis amazement more than love,
Which her radiant eyes do move ;
If less splendor wait on thine,
Yet they so benignly shine,
I would turn my dazzled sight
To behold their milder light.

But as hard 'tis to destroy
That high flame as to enjoy :

Which how easily I may do,
Heaven, as easily scaled, does know.

Amoret, as sweet and good
As the most delicious food,
Which but tasted does impart
Life and gladness to the heart.

Sacharissa's beauty's wine
Which to madness doth incline ;
Such a liquor as no brain
That is mortal, can sustain.

Scarce can I to heaven excuse
The devotion which I use ;
Unto that adored name ;
For 'tis not unlike the same,
Which I thither ought to send,
So that if it could take end ;
'Twould to Heaven itself be due
To succeed her, and not you,
Who already have of me
All that's not idolatry ;
Which, though not so fierce a flame,
Is longer like to be the same.

Then smile on me, and I will prove
Wonder is shorter-lived than love.

BENEATH the sacred shade of that fair tree,
From *Sidney's* birth that marks the flight of
time,

Thus framed the bard his easy artful lay,
And left, as heedless, there. From wasting
dews

The doves of *Venus* with their sheltering wings
The soft impressions saved ; till the fair star,
That lights the hour of love, and lonely mus-
ing,

Led *Sacharissa* on her wonted way
To *Sidney's* sacred tree—she saw, she read ;
And twice she felt the soothing charm of power,
And twice the sense of conquest on her cheek
Sate in an Orient blush. Even jealousy
She seemed to feel, when in his closing strain
Her captive feigned to fly—Ah, shepherd, then,
For thee what triumph!—triumph—short and
vain!

'Tis art, she cried ; O insolence of art,
And smooth design, to catch the wareless ear
Of unsuspecting virgins ! soothing strains,
Insidious flattery, hence ! From her fair hand
The folded paper fell—yet, parting sighs
Swelled her fair bosom, and with voice more
soft

Than *Echo's* when she caught the dying plaint

Of young *Narcissus*, parting, she resumed—

“ But for *Sacharissa* I

“ Do not only grieve, but die.”

From the deep covert of a lonely shade,
Where rambling wild vines bound the osier
spray,

Th’ impatient lover sprung—Ah, desperate
youth !

Sure ruin follows that rash deed—Unmark’d
By thee, the sweet infection should have stolen
Through her unconscious heart—awaked, a-
larm’d,

The magic works no more : With swifter steps
Not *Daphne* fled from thy mistaken master,
Like thee precipitately lost—yet still

One hope remains : defend her injured fame :
The love of power, the love of pleasure yields
To that prevailing honesty of pride
Which spurns at envy’s falshood——

On the Misreport of SACHARISSA’s being painted.

AS when a sort of wolves infest the night
With their wild howlings at fair *Cynthia’s* light,
The noise may chase sweet slumber from our
eyes,

But never reach the mistress of the skies :
So with the news of *Sacharissa’s* wrongs,

Her servants vexed blame those envious
tongues ;

Call love to witness, that no painted fire
Can scorch men so, or kindle such desire :
While unconcerned, she seems moved no more,
With this new malice, than our loves before ;
But from the height of her great mind looks
down

On both our passions, without smile or frown :
So little care of what is done below
Hath the bright dame whom Heaven affecteth so.
Paints her, 'tis true, with the same hand which
spreads

Like glorious colours o'er the flowery meads
When lavish Nature with her best attire
Clothes the gay spring, the season of desire.
Paints her, 'tis true, and does her cheek adorn
With the same art, wherewith she paints the
morn :

With the same art wherewith she gildeth so
Those painted clouds that form *Traumantia's*
bow.

Desunt cætera————

LETTER XXXII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

THE statue of the *Cretan Jupiter* was without ears; and the reason one of the ancient Mythologists gives for it is, that the governor of the Universe, whose care is over the whole, should not be supposed to be particularly attentive to any individual. Had that Mythologist lived in these times, and heard the prayers of our bigots, our enthusiasts and fanatics, he might have assigned a much better reason for *Jupiter's* deafness. The father of Gods and Men, might he have said, was so harrassed by the latter with vain, selfish, impudent, abasing and absurd addresses, that he ordered *Mercury* to convey to them his image without ears; thereby signifying how little they had to hope from their impertinent petitions.

It is observable that God is never so much blasphemed as when men are most religious. It is then that they so liberally invest him with their peculiar follies, passions and prejudices. The Creator of the Universe must be of a party, a sect, or faction. He must be particularly their God, or he is no God. His attributes and qualities must be such as are most

likely to serve their proper purposes: if their way be through heaps of slain, he must go before them. The blood of his creatures must be shed for his glory; and he who has declared that his delight is in mercy more than sacrifice, is not allowed to be served or gratified in his own way. The *Scots* fanatics, after the loss of a battle, gave him a very warm reception. They remonstrated with great spirit against his conduct towards the Saints, and intimated, that whatever right he might have to their allegiance as the Lord, he was but a poor politician, and had very little idea of his own interest. "For our parts, (said they,) it is but a small thing for us to lose our lands and inheritance; but for the Lord's flock to be lessened, his glory set at naught, and his people trodden under foot; this shews a strange negligence somewhere."

Prayers and addresses conceived in such a spirit as this, surely approach very near blasphemy; but it is true in religious as well as in social life, that too much familiarity begets contempt. The Lord must not look for very much respect from those with whom he vouchsafes to be so intimate.

The Marquis of *Halifax* used to say, that

the common people would not believe in God at all, unless they were permitted to believe wrong in him. I doubt not the truth of his observation; but I am of opinion, that there are some modes of faith worse than infidelity, and that fanaticism is a more dangerous thing than irreligion.

LETTER XXXIII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND

The Duchess of *R*——, whom you once pleased so much by telling her that she was descended from *Leda*, has lately given us a proof that you mistook her ancestry, and that she is more nearly allied to *Medea*. While she amused herself with harmless extravagancies, with dreams of knight-errantry and heroic love, her follies were entertaining. Nothing more pleasant than to find her by moonlight reposing under an oak near the old Castle, with a flaming crescent on her head, in the character of *Dian*; while my poor lord Duke, under the burthen of his infirmities, was condemned to hobble up to her, and personate *Endymion*. These are things which, as the poet says, *Jove* laughs at. One of her last adventures was of a more serious cast.

A certain itinerant philosopher, a profound adept in the occult sciences, recommended to her the merit of his art, and found no great difficulty in persuading her that it was in his power to restore her to youth and beauty. The process he recommended was somewhat different from the operation that *Æson* was supposed to undergo. A fat, well grown, well looking young fellow

was to be found out for [the purpose, drawn, quartered, and distilled, into the quintessence of juvenility. A son of one of her Grace's tenants was pitched upon as a proper subject, but the philosopher deeming him not quite fat enough, he was put up for a short time to feed. The richest food of every kind was procured for him, and he was confined to an apartment just large enough to contain his bed, that he might not impair his corpulence by exercise. The poor man's curiosity was naturally excited by such extraordinary instances of her Grace's goodness, and one day seeing the Duke's Fool before his window, he asked him the meaning of it. "Do not you see that
" 'Turkey [in the coop? (said the Fool) you are
" kept here for the same purpose. The Duchess is sick of fish and butcher's meat, and she
" intends to eat you." This information had such an effect upon the intended victim, that he presently pined away, and the philosopher, thinking him an improper subject, he was dismissed. Another was soon fixed upon, but the King being informed of the matter, and fearing the consequence of her Grace's absurdity, commanded her to give up her chemistry, and her philosopher to be hanged.

This ridiculous affair has led me into many
of obsolete en

serious reflections on the errors of the mind. 'Tis obvious from this, as well as a thousand other instances, how much every species of enthusiasm destroys the power of moral reason. From that source sprung all this poor woman's absurdities. Her passion for the high romance absorbed every other principle. The sense of justice, honour, truth, and decency was totally overborne. So it is in religious, so it is in political systems: let us once become enthusiasts; there is nothing so wicked we will not do for religion, nothing so impolitic we will not attempt for our country.

LETTER XXXIV.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

I NEVER think of the glorious fate of ancient genius, without a sigh that rises from the most sensible part of my soul. You have an expression in your language, *Je meurs d'Envie*, which is descriptive of what I feel. To be carried down the current of time, my *St. Evremond*, undestroyed by the wrecks of two thousand years! To have our best productions, the productions of the mind, confirm and maintain their existence in the souls of surviving ages, when our ashes have been so long the sport of winds, that even the winds cannot find them! Heavens! What glory is in the hope! My soul is on fire at the prospect! The spirit of this ambition is irresistible! It is enchantment! It is magic!

But oh! my friend, it is delusion; it is vanity! The fugitive state of modern language forebodes destruction to every thing that is conveyed in it. Your wit, your elegance of thought, your vivacity of imagination will share the same fate with my trifling strains, and be involved in the impenetrable mass of obsolete expression.

Your language seems, indeed, to be somewhat nearer a period of perfection than that in which I am obliged to write. You begun more early to refine, and phraseological criticism was more cultivated in your country. Yet the time, I apprehend, is at no great distance, when our harsher and heavier periods will lose the stiffness and formality of their march, and acquire an air of grace and delicacy, without being impaired in their strength. Whenever that æra shall arrive, the *English* language will be in a state of comparative excellence, beyond which it will be hazardous for it to go. For, should it once depart from its characteristic simplicity, and affect a pompous and inflated diction, that will prove a certain symptom of its decay.

It is to be feared that our language will have the same fate which that of *Rome* had formerly. Men of vain minds and weak judgments will think it a merit at least to be singular. For this purpose they will depart from Nature, and, instead of pursuing her plain and easy walks, will ride like *Sancho* and his unfortunate master through sulphur, smoke, and clouds.

The genius of your language sets this danger at a greater distance from you ; but when ill-judging writers rise up amongst us, I am afraid that it will be the fate of the *English* tongue to perish, like *Sampson*, by a fatal exertion of its own strength.

LETTER XXXV.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

WHEN the prince of *Conde* was in prison, the princess headed his party in *Normandy*; and as that great general amused himself in a little garden adjoining to his apartments, he used to say pleasantly, that whilst he was watering pinks, his wife was making war. My occupations, since I quitted those of the field, have, I think, been of much the same consequence, and have answered much the same purpose. When I had done with making war, I betook myself to making songs, and making love. When they would no longer let me fight in *France*, I sate down to write verses in *England*, and took up the *belle* passion for the sole end of inspiriting and embellishing my poetry.

At first I looked upon my exile as the worst of evils; but for these many years past I have been in doubt whether, on the whole, my life has been a loser by it or not. If the pursuits of wealth, of court distinctions, and military glory have nothing more important in them than those of poetry and love, I have even profited by the exchange. For the labours, the anxieties and difficulties necessarily attend-

ing the former darken many an hour that might otherwise have passed, if not in pleasure, at least in tranquility.

If the delight I have experienced in the cultivation of a successful amour has not been equal to that of a general after victory, neither was it attended with those painful reflections, which the very means and circumstances of conquest, must give to a mind that has the least sensibility. For my own part, when I bore arms, though I never went into the field of battle without pleasure, I never quitted it without tears. A strange, ferocious kind of joy that must be, which arises from beholding the bodies of the brave, either in death or in chains. The glorious man I have just mentioned used to suffer the greatest distress, when he saw a gallant enemy mortally wounded. My victories, he would say, give me more pain than the severest duties of command.

From these, and many other inconveniencies, I was set free, when I was no longer retained in the military service of *France*. The abuse and ingratitude that FORTUNE meets with in the world are utterly indefensible. How often have I accused her of severity, in instances where

she was most effectually serving me! In the protection and beneficence of a monarch, I have, in this happy country, long enjoyed both security and support. When deprived of every post of profit and honour in my own nation, the transition was only from a life of labour and service, to a state of ease and freedom; where my hours were my own, and I was left to the pursuit of such objects as might amuse me most. I found in the refined philosophy of taste and the *Belles Lettres*, in the cultivation of wit and gallantry, in the religion of love and beauty, and in the conversation and favour of the most distinguished persons of the age, materials of happiness sufficient for the whole circle of time.

Yet in the language and memory of those few friends I have in *France*, I am still *pauvre St. Evremond! comment malheureux!* You will be happy when I assure you, that, whatever I might once have wished, there is not one of these compassionate persons with whom I would change my station.

LETTER XXXVI.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

THERE is a passage in *Aristotle* concerning the island of *Sicily*, which I never recollect without the greatest pleasure. It is observable, says the philosopher, that the earth and air of this country are so impregnated with the odour of its flowers, that the dogs have no power to trace the scent in hunting. Enter into the Heathen Theology, and this gives you quite a new and most amiable idea of the queen of flowers. Supposing her to be one of the tutelary deities of the island, she is thus concerned for the preservation and security of the innocent animals that inhabit it.

I never had any enthusiastic enjoyment so great as this, and many other circumstances attending this once celebrated country, inspired me with. When I was upon the continent, my curiosity naturally led me to visit a place which had been the repository of arts and arms, the granary of the world, the prize of contending Empires, the seat of the Muses, but particularly the birth-place of pastoral poetry.

Of these fair scenes what monuments remain!
A burning mountain, and a barren plain!

Yet there are some few parts of the island that still bear the marks of its ancient fertility and beauty: particularly that part which answers to the beautiful description of *Theocritus*, where an extensive lawn of pasturage stretches from the mountains to the sea. I imagined that I had found the very rock, under the shadow of which his shepherd is represented sitting with his shepherdess in his arms, and looking with complacency on his flocks, as they fed towards the sea. Enchanted with the idea, I was carried headlong into verse, and carved upon a neighbouring beech something like the stanzas that follow:

SWEET land of muses! o'er whose favour'd
 plains
Ceres and *Flora* held alternate sway;
By *Jove* refresh'd with life-diffusing rains,
By *Phæbus* blest with every kinder ray!

O with what pride do I those times survey,
When freedom, by her rustic minstrels led,
Danced on the green lawn many a summer's
 day,
While pastoral ease reclined her careless head,

In these soft shades ; ere yet that shepherd
fled,
Whose music pierc'd earth, air, and heaven
and hell,
And called the ruthless tyrant of the dead
From the dark slumbers of his iron cell.

His ear unfolding caught the magic spell :
He felt the sounds glide softly through his heart ;
The sounds that deign'd of love's sweet power
to tell ;
And as they told, would point his golden dart.

Fixed was the God ; nor power had he to part,
For the fair daughter of the sheaf-crown'd queen,
Fair without pride, and lovely without art,
Gathered her wild flowers on the daisied green.

He saw ; he sighed ; and that unmelting breast,
Which arms the hand of death, the power of
love confessed.

LETTER XXXVII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

* THE letter I wrote to poor *Mazarin*, to dissuade her from entering on the conventual life, has not yet been in any other hands. That, and the stanzas on the same subject, I have reserved amongst those private pledges of tenderness and friendship which the memory of a beloved object makes of much consequence to ourselves, though they may be of little or none to others. I will give them up to you, notwithstanding ; but on condition that you shall make them something better than they are, by returning them cloathed in your own language.

* *This letter, and the stanzas that follow it, are the only pieces in this collection that have appeared before. Mr. Waller's translation has never been printed ; and the original's do so much honour to St. Evremond, that the editor thought he should consult both his reputation, and the entertainment of the public, by inserting them.*

LETTRE

A MADAME LA DUCHESSE MAZARINE,

*Sur le dessein qu'elle avoit de se retirer dans un
couvent.*

* * * * *

COMMENT est-il possible que vous quittiez des gens que vous charmez et qui vous adorent, des amis que vous aimez mieux qu'ils ne s'aiment eux-mêmes, pour aller chercher des inconnus qui vous déplairont, et dont vous serez peut-être outragée ? Songez vous, Madame, que vous vous jetez dans un couvent, que Madame la connetable avoit en horreur. Si elle y rentre, c'est qu'il y faut rentrer ou mourir ; sa captivité presente, toute affreuse qu'elle est lui semble moins dure que cet infortuné séjour ; et pour y aller, Madame, vous voulez quitter une cour où vous êtes estimée, où l'affection d'un roi doux et honnête vous traite si bien, où toutes les personnes raisonnables ont du respect et de l'amitié pour vous. Le jour le plus heureux que vous passerez dans le couvent ne vaudra pas le plus triste que vous passerez dans votre maison.

Encore si vous étiez touchée d'une grâce particulière de Dieu, qui vous attachât à son service, on excuseroit la dureté de votre condition,

par l'ardeur de votre zele qui vous rendroit tout supportable : mais je ne vous trouve pas persuadée, et il vous faut apprendre à croire celui que vous allez servir si durement. Vous trouverez toutes les peines des religieuses, et ne trouverez point cet epoux qui les console. Tout epoux a vous est odieux, et dans le couvent et dans le monde. Doubter un jour de la felicité de l'autre vie est assez pour desesperer la plus sainte fille d'un couvent ; car la foi seule la fortifié, et la rend capable de supporter les mortifications qu'elle se donne. Qui sait, Madame, si vous croirez un quart-d'heure ce qu'il faut qu'elle croye toujours pour n'être pas malheureux ? Qui sait si l'idée d'un bonheur promis aura jamais la force de vous soutenir contre les sentiments de maux presens.

Il n'y a rien de plus raisonnable à des gens veritablement persuadés que de vivre dans l'austerité, qu'ils croient necessaire pour arriver à la possession d'un bien éternel ; et rien de plus sage à ceux qui ne le sont pas, que de prendre ici leurs commodités, et de goûter avec moderation tous les plaisirs ou ils sont sensibles. C'est la raison pourquoi les philosophes qui ont crû l'immortalité de l'ame, ont compté pour rien toutes les douceurs de ce monde, et que ceux qui n'attendoient rien après la mort, ont mis le

souverain bien dans la volupté. Pour vous, Madame, vous avez une philosophie toute nouvelle. Opposée à Epicure, vous cherchez les peines, les mortifications, les douleurs. Contraire à Socrate, vous n'attendez aucune récompense de la vertu. Vous vous faites religieuse sans beaucoup de religion : Vous méprisez ce monde ici, et vous ne faites pas grand cas de l'autre. A moins que vous n'en ayiez trouvé un troisième fait pour vous, il n'y a pas moyen de justifier votre conduite.

Il faut, Madame , il faut se persuader avant que de se contraindre : Il ne faut pas souffrir sans savoir pour qui l'on souffre. En un mot, il faut travailler sérieusement à connoître Dieu avant que de renoncer à soi-même. C'est au milieu de l'univers que la contemplation des merveilles de la nature vous fera connoître celui dont elle depend. La vûe du soleil vous fera connoître la grandeur et la magnificence de celui qui l'a formé. Cet ordre, si merveilleux et si juste, qui lie et entretient toutes choses, vous donnera la connoissance de sa sagesse. Enfin, Madame, dans ce monde que vous quittez, Dieu est tout ouvert, et tout expliqué à nos pensées. Il est si resserré dans les monasteres, qu'il se cache au lieu de se decouvrir ; si déguisé par les basses et indignes figures qu'on

lui donne, que les plus éclairés ont de la peine à le reconnoître. Cependant une vieille supérieure ne vous parlera que de lui, et ne connoîtra rien moins : Elle vous commandera des sottises, et une exacte obeissance suivra toujours le commandement, quelque ridicule qu'il puisse être. Le directeur ne preudra pas moins d'ascendant sur vous, et votre raison humiliée se verra soumise à une ignorance presumptueuse. La raison, ce caractere secret, cette image de Dieu que nous portons en nos ames vous, fera passer pour rebelle, si vous ne reverez l'imbecillité de la nature humaine en ce directeur. De bonnes sœurs trop simples vous degoûteront ; des libertines vous donnerent du scandale : vous verrez les crimes du monde : Helas ! vous en aurez quitté les plaisirs.

Jusqu'ici vous avez vécu dans les grandeurs, et dans les délices ; vous avez été élevée en Reine, et vous meritez de l'être. Devenue heritiere du Ministre qui gouvernoit l'univers vous avez eu plus de bien en mariage, que toutes les Reines de l'Europe ensemble n'en ont porté aux rois leurs epoux. Un jour vous a enlevé tous ces biens ; mais votre merite vous a tenu lieu de votre fortune, et vous a fait vivre plus magnifiquement dans les pays etrangers que vous

n'eussiez vécu dans le nôtre. La curiosité, la délicatesse, la propreté, le soin de votre personne, les commodités, les plaisirs ne vous ont pas abandonnée ; et si votre discrétion vous a défendu des voluptés, vous avez cet avantage, que jamais faveurs n'ont été si désirées que les vôtres.

Que trouverez vous, Madame, ou vous allez ? Vous trouverez une défense rigoureuse de tout ce que demande raisonnablement la nature, de tout ce qui est permis à l'humanité. Une cellule, un méchant lit, un plus detestable repas, des habits sales et puants remplaceront vos délices. Vous serez seule à vous servir, seule à vous plaire, au milieu de tant de choses que vous déplairont ; et peut-être ne serez vous pas en état d'avoir pour vous la plus secrète complaisance de l'amour propre ; peut-être que votre beauté devenue toute inutile, ne se decouvrira, ni à vos yeux, ni à ceux des autres.

Cependant, Madame, cette beauté si merveilleuse, ce grand ornement de l'univers, ne vous a pas été donnée pour le cacher. Vous vous devez au public, à vos amis, à vous-même. Vous êtes faite pour vous plaire, pour plaire à tous, pour dissiper la tristesse, inspirer la joie, pour

ranimer generalement tout ce qui languit. Quand les laides et les imbécilles se jettent dans les couvens, c'est une inspiration divine qui leur fait quitter le monde, ou elles ne paroissent que pour faire honte a leur auteur. Sur votre sujet, Madame, c'est une vraie tentation du Diable, lequel, envieux de la gloire de Dieu, ne peut souffrir l'admiration que nous donne son plus bel ouvrage. Vingt ans de pseumes et de Cantiques chantés dans le chœur ne feront pas tant pour cette gloire, comme un seul jour que votre beauté sera exposée aux yeux des hommes. Vous montrer est votre veritable vocation : c'est le culte le plus propre que vous puissiez lui rendre. Si le temps a pouvoir d'effacer vos traits, comme il efface ceux des autres, s'il ruine un jour cette beauté que nous admirons, retirez vous alors ; et apres avoir accompli la volonté de celui qui la formée, allez chanter ses louanges dans le couvent. Mais suivez la disposition qu'il a faite de votre vie ; car si vous prevenez l'heure qu'il a destinée pour votre retraite, vous trahirez ses intentions, par une secrette complaisance pour son ennemi.

Un de vos grands malheurs, Madame, si vous ecoutez cet ennemi, c'est que vous n'aurez

à vous prendre de tous vos maux qu'à vous-même. Madame la Connetable rejette les siens sur la violence qu'on lui fait. Elle a les cruautés d'un mari qui la force, l'injustice d'une cour qu'appuie son mari : elle a mille objets, vrais ou faux, qu'elle peut accuser. Vous n'avez que vous, Madame, pour cause de votre infortune. Vous n'avez à condamner que votre erreur. Dieu vous explique ses volontés par ma bouche, et vous ne m'écoutez pas. Il se sert de mes raisons pour vous sauver, et vous ne consultez que vous pour vous perdre. Un jour accablée de tous les maux que je vous dépeins, vous songerez, mais trop tard, à celui qui a voulu les empêcher.

Peut-être étés-vous flattée de bruit que fera votre retraite, et par une vanité extravagante, vous croyez qu'il n'y a rien de plus illustre que de dérober au monde la plus grande beauté qu'on y vit jamais, quand les autres ne donnent à Dieu qu'une laideur naturelle, où les ruines d'un visage tout effacé. Mais depuis quand préférez-vous l'erreur de l'opinion à la réalité des choses ? Et qui vous a dit, après tout, que votre résolution ne paroîtra pas aussi folle qu'extraordinaire ? Qui vous a dit qu'on ne la prendra pas pour le retour d'une humeur errante et voyageuse ? qu'on ne croira pas que vous voulez faire tro

cens lieues pour chercher une aventure, celeste, si vous voulez, mais toujours une espece d'aventure ?

Je ne doute point que vous n'esperiez trouver beaucoup de douceur dans l'entretien de Madame la Connétable ; mais, si je ne me trompe, cette douceur là finira bientôt. Apèrs avoir parlé trois ou quatre jours de la France, et de l'Italie, apres avoir parlé de la passion du roi, et de la timidité de Monsieur votre oncle, et de ce que vous avez pensé être, et de ce que vous etès devenue : apres avoir épuisé le souvenir de la maison de Monsieur le Connétable, de votre sortie de Rome, et du malheureux succès de vos voyages, vous vous trouverez enfermée dans un couvent ; et votre captivité, dont vous commencerez a sentir la rigueur, vòus fera songer a la douce liberté que vous aurez goûtée en Angleterre. Les choses qui vous paroissent ennuyeuses aujourd'hui, se presenteront avec des charmes ; et ce que vous aurez quittée par degout, reviendra solliciter votre envie. Alors, Madame, alors, de quelle force d'esprit n'aurez-vous pas besoin, pour vous consoler de maux présens et des biens perdus ?

Je veux que mes pénétrations soient fausses et mes conjectures mal sondées : je veux que la conversation de Madame la Connétable ait

toujours de grands agréments pour vous : mais qui vous dira que vous en pourrez jouir librement ? Une des maximes des couvens est de ne souffrir aucune liaison entre des personnes qui se plaisent, parce que l'union des particuliers est une espece de detachment des obligations contractées avec l'ordre. D'ailleurs les soins de Monsieur le Connétable pourront bien s'étendre jusqu'à empêcher une communication qui fait tout craindre à un homme soupçonneux qui a trop offensé. Je ne parle point des caprices d'une supérieure, ni des secrettes jalousies des religieuses, qui voudront nuire à une personne, dont le mérite confondra le leur. Ainsi, Madame, vous vous serez faite religieuse pour vivre avec Madame la Connétable, et il arrivera que vous ne la verrez presque pas. Vous serez, donc. ou seule avec vos tristes, imaginations, ou dans la foule, parmi les sottises, et les erreurs, ennuyée des sermons en langue qui vous sera peu connue, fatiguée des Matins qui auront troublé votre repos, lassée d'une habitude continuelle, du chant des Vêpres, et du murmure importun de quelque Rosaire.

Quel parti prendre, Madame ? Conservez votre raison : Vous vous rendrez malheureuse si vous la perdez. Quelle perte de n'avoir plus d'ecdiscernement si exquis, et cette intelligence

si rare ! Avez-vous commis un si grand crime contre vous, que vous devez vous punir aussi rigoureusement que vous faites ? Et quel sujet de plainte avez vous contre vos amis, pour exercer sur eux une si cruelle vengeance ? Les Italiens assassinent leurs ennemis : mais leurs amis se sauvent de la justice sauvage qu'ils se veulent faire.

Mademoiselle de Beverweert et moi avons déjà eu les coups mortels : la pensée de vos maux a fait les nôtres ; et je me trouve aujourd'hui le plus misérable de tous les hommes, parceque vous allez vous rendre la plus malheureuse de toutes les femmes. Quand je vais voir Mademoiselle de Beverweert les Matins, nous nous regardons un quart d'heure sans parler ; et ce triste silence est toujours accompagné de nos larmes. Ayez pitié de nous, Madame, si vous n'en avez de vous même. On peut se priver des commodités de la vie pour l'amour de ses amis ; nous vous demandons que vous vous priviez des tourmens, et nous ne saurions l'obtenir. Il faut que vous ayez une dureté bien naturelle, puisque vous êtes la première à en ressentir les effets. Songez, Madame, songez sérieusement à ce que je vous dit ; vous êtes sur le bord du precipice ; un pas en avant, vous êtes perdue ; un pas en

arriere, vous êtes en pleine sûreté. Vos biens et vos maux dependent de vous. Ayez la force de vouloir être heureuse, et vous la serez.

Si vous quittez le monde, comme vous semblez vous y preparer, ma consolation est que je n'y demeurerai pas long temps. La nature, plus favorable que vous, finira bientôt ma triste vie. Cependant, Madame, vos ordres previennent, les siens, quand il vous plaira ; car les droits qu'elle se garde sur moi ne vont qu'après ceux que je vous y donne. Il n'est point de voyage que je n'entreprenne ; et si pour derniera rigueur, vous n'y voulez pas consentir, je me cacherai dans un désert dégouté de toute autre commerce que le votre. Là, votre idée me tiendra lieu des tous objects ; là je me detacherai de moi-même, s'il est permis de parler ainsi pour penser eternellement à vous ; là, j'apprendrai à tout ce monde ce qu'auront pû sur moi, le charme de votre merite, et la force de ma douleur.

SENTIMENTS *de Madame la Duchesse MAZARIN, qui se consacre à Dieu.*

S T A N C E S.

SAINTS et sacrés ennuis, salutaire tristesse,
Dégouts dont mon esprit est oncupé sans cesse;
Chassez les vains desirs qui restent dans mon
cœur ;

Eteignez dans mon sein le sentiment des vices ;
Eteignez l'appétit de mes fausees delilices,
Et faites que le ciel aujourd'hui soit vainqueur.
C'est pour lui deormais que j'ai dessein de
vivre.

Vous m'attirez, Seigneur ; Seigneur, il faut
vous suivre ;

Vous aurez tous mes soins, vous aurez mon
amour :

A vos loix seulement je vais être asservie ;
Et je veux bien donner le reste de ma vie
Au Dieu dont la bonté m'a sù donner le jour.

Ce Dieu qui me forma si charmante et si belle,
A borné ses faveurs, et me laisse mortelle.
Malgré tout le pouvoir qu'il donne à mes appas,
Le temps effacera les traits de mon visage ;
Et l'esprit, de ce dieu la plus vivante image,
Echappera lui seul aux rigeurs du trepas.

Quel bonheur est certain d'une longue durée ?
Quelle condition nous peut-être assurée ?
Qui peut nous garantir des injures du sort !
On ne possède rien qui ne soit périssable :
Souvent le plus heureux devient si misérable,
Qu'il semble avoir besoin du secours de la mort.
J'ai connu tous les biens qu'apporte la fortune ;
J'ai connu la grandeur, et sa pompe importune ;
En amour, pour les Moins, j'ai connu les desirs ;
Des fausses vanités j'ai fait l'expérience ;
Et je connois enfin qu'une heure d'innocence
Vaut mieux qu'un siècle entier de frivoles plaisirs.

Faites, faites, Seigneur, que vos saintes lumières
Dissipent l'ignorance, et les erreurs grossières
Dont mon esprit confus étoit enveloppé.
Le monde est un trompeur ; Dieu seul est véritable,
Je n'espere qu'en lui, je ne suis plus capable
De me laisser surprendre à ce qui m'a trompé.

Temps ou se doit fixer ma longue incertitude,
Lieux qui devez finir ma triste inquiétude,
Quand me donnerez-vous ce repos souhaité ?
Je délibere encore, jour et nuit je consulte
Si je doit préférer vos douceurs au tumulte :
C'en est fait, lieux sacrés, vous l'avez emporté.

O vous, Maître absolu de la terre et de l'onde,
Vous, dont l'ordre secret gouverne tout le
monde,

Voudrez vous bien, Seigneur, devenir mon
époux ?

Celui qu'on me donna n'est pas digne de l'être,
C'est vous seul aujourd'hui qui je veux reconnoître.

Mes liens sont rompus, et je suis toute à vous.

Vieux et tristes liens, causes de tant de larmes,
Peut-être que sans vous le monde eut eu ces
charmes ;

Mais le monde avec vous est aisément vaincu.

Je ferai désormais en quelque solitude,

D'un doux et saint repos une paisible étude,

Et compterai pour rien le temps que j'ai vécu.

Palais, meubles, habits, folle magnificence,
Jeu, repas, vains sujets de luxe et de dépense,

Je vous dis maintenant un éternel adieu :

Beaux cheveux, doux liens ou s'engageoient les
ames,

Qui prenoient en mes yeux les amoureuses
flâmes,

Beaux cheveux, je vous coupe, et vous consacre
à DIEU.

Un voile pour jamais va couvrir mon visage,
Et ma beauté cachée y perdra tout usage
De ce charme trompeur qui sait flatter les sens :
Un amant y perdra le sujet de sa peine :
Je vais perdre les noms *d'ingrate* et *d'inhumaine*,
Et les maux qu'en secret, moi-même je ressens.

Je vous degage, amans, des loix de mon empire ;
Pour des objets nouveaux si votre cœur soupire :
Je ne me plaindra point d'une infidélité :
J'aimerois mieux pourtant—que les femmes
sont vaines !
J'aimerois vous voir au sortir des mes chaines,
Jouir paisiblement de votre liberté.

J'aimerois mieux encor que votre ame fidèle
De sa première ardeur formât un nouveau zèle,
Qui nous tiendrait unis même après le trépas.
De ce nouvel amour sentez l'heureuse atteinte ;
Vous m'aimâtes profane, aimez-moi comme
sainte,
Et suivez mes vertus au lieu de mes appas.
Mais des adieux si longs aux amans que l'on
quitte,
Montrent notre foiblesse, ou marquent leur
mérite ;
C'est un reste secret des profanes amours,

Permettez, lieux divins, quelque humaine tendresse,
Pour ceux qui m'ont aimée, et qu'au-jourd'hui
je laisse,
Ils ne me verront plus, et vous m'aurez toujours.

A Mons. de St. EVREMOND.

SUJET, triste sujet, qui pleurez mon absence,
Pourquoi me plaignez-vous, quand mon bonheur commence,
C'est à vous seulement que vous devez des pleurs ;
Je ne menerai plus cet vie incertaine
Dont vous fûtes témoin ; et finissant ma peine,
Je vous donne un exemple à finir vos malheurs,

La retraite à vôtre âge est toujours nécessaire ;
Avec tant de beauté vous me la voyez faire,
Et vous iriez encor vous traîner dans les cours ?
Que si la voix du Ciel de tout autre écoutée
Sur le bord de cercueil est par vos rejetée,
De la morale, au moins écoutez le discours.

Le Ciel est impuissant, et la raison timide
Sur vos durs sentimens trop foiblement préside ;

Mais vous devez encor reconnoître ma loi :
 Retirez-vous, vieillard ; c'est moi qui vous
 l'ordonne ;
 Voici l'ordre dernier qu'en Reine je vous
 donne ;
 Vieillard, quittez le monde en même-temps que
 moi .

ST. EYREMOND.

MA Reine me verroit a son ordre fidèle,
 Mais la mort où je cours m'empêche d'obêir ;
 Il m'est plus aisé de mourir
 Que de vivre un moment sans elle.

LETTER XXXVIII.

WALLER TO ST EVREMOND.

THE most perfect and most persuasive piece of eloquence that ancient or modern times have produced, would require a more masterly hand than mine to do it justice in a translation. In passing from one language to another, every work suffers; but works of wit more than others. The peculiar felicities of expression are most commonly incommunicable, and the task of the translator is some what like that of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, who were obliged to make the same kind of bricks with stubble that had usually been made with straw; It is like that of an architect, who is to imitate with exactness his model, and yet must build with different materials, which, by means of weight or lightness, will give his work a different air.— I am not mentioning these disadvantages without the expectation of indulgence. Your letter and verses will not appear in their original beauty, but I have endeavoured, as much as possible, to preserve your ideas.

To the Duchess of MAZARIN, on her design of retiring into a convent.

IS it possible, then, Madame, that you should quit that society, of which you are so justly the admiration and delight? abandon the friends that adore you! for whom? for strangers, who want even the capacity of giving you pleasure; for strangers that will give you disgust? Reflect, Madame, that you are about to enter upon a life which your illustrious sister could not look upon without horror. If she retires into a convent, it is because the alternative is death. Her present confinement, dreadful as it is, seems, in her opinion, preferable to that wretched retreat. But your situation, how different! For, is it a prison you exchange for a Nunnery? Is it not a court, where you are universally respected; where you enjoy the truest and tenderest affection of a Monarch, and where all the liberal and the sensible world receive you into their friendship and esteem? The happiest day that a convent will afford you will not be worth the least enlivened hours you pass at present.

Were it the influence of some prevailing grace that attached you wholly to religious duties, the severities of the life you lay before you,

might find some apology, in the ardor of that zeal, which would render them more supportable. But, far from the possession of grace, you have not even faith: you have yet to learn to believe in that master, for whom you are about to engage in so painful a service. You will experience all the hardships of religious retirement, without finding that spouse, by whose consolations they are alleviated. The very name of spouse is odious to you, whether in a convent or in a court. To entertain the least shadow of doubt concerning the happiness of a future existence, were sufficient to destroy the peace of the most pious sister. It is faith alone that supports her and reconciles her to the voluntary mortifications of her life. But is it certain Madam, that you shall believe, even for one moment, what your happiness requires that you should believe always? Is it certain that your confidence of future felicity will be sufficient to support you under the sense of present sufferings.

For the family of faith, nothing can be more reasonable, than to endure those austerities which they believe to be necessary to their eternal welfare. But, for those who are of different sentiments, a different oeconomy is necessa-

ry. It is their proper happiness to embrace the conveniences of life, and to pursue, with moderation, those pleasures that are adapted to their nature. It was upon this principle, that those philosophers, who believed the immortality of the soul, depreciated the delights of this life; and that those, who entertained no opinion of a future existence, placed the sovereign good in pleasure. But you, Madam, have a philosophy of a species altogether uncommon. Contrary to the doctrine of *Epicurus*, the objects of your pursuit are pains, and sufferings, and sorrows. Inconsistent with the principles of *Socrates*, you have no belief in the rewards of virtue. You engage in a religious life, without religion. You set this world at naught, and yet you have no idea of the other. It is at least necessary that a third should be created for your purpose, were it but to justify your conduct.

It is absolutely necessary that you should believe, before you engage. It is necessary you should know for whom you suffer, before you enter upon your sufferings. In short, it is necessary to obtain a proper knowledge of God, before you give up to him the interest of your life. It is in the visible creation that the contemplation of the wonders of nature will bring

you acquainted with her sublime author. It is the sight of the sun that must give you an idea of the magnificence of him that made it. It is that order which is preserved in the great chain of created being, that must inspire you with proper sentiments of the astonishing wisdom of the Creator. It is in that world you are about to forsake, where God is to be found. It is in his works you are to read an account of his being. Is he to be found in the narrow precincts of a monastery? Far from being discovered there, is he not concealed?—So disguised by low and unworthy images, that he is hid even from that intelligence he has given?

Yet shall you continually hear of him from some Aged abbess, who will talk to you concerning him, and know nothing of him. She will command you to do the absurdest things, and her commands must be implicitly obeyed. Your confessor will have equally the ascendant over you, and your humbled reason must submit to the tyranny of presumptuous ignorance. Reason! that hidden character! that image of the Deity imprest upon the soul, will make you considered in the light of a rebel, if you pay not the most abject deference to the weakness of human nature in the person of that confessor.

The *good* sisters will disgust you with their insipidity; the libertines will expose you to scandal. You will find yourself surrounded by the infirmities of life; and, alas! you will find that you have parted with its pleasures.

Hitherto you have lived in luxury and in grandeur. You have had the education of a queen, and you were justly entitled to it. The heiress of a minister who governed the world, your marriage portion exceeded the united fortunes of all the queens in *Europe*. One fatal day deprived you of your possessions, but your merit supplied the place of fortune, and established you in that magnificence in a land of strangers, which you had hardly known in your own country. A love of elegance, a natural delicacy, a regard for personal ornament, the conveniences of situation, and the pleasures of life, have not forsaken you, and if your discretion has preserved you from other indulgences, your virtue has the greater merit; for never were favours more solicited than yours.

What is it, Madam, that you will find in a convent? what, but a rigorous abstinence from every innocent indulgence that nature may re-

quire, or reason allow ? a cell, a wretched bed, a more wretched diet, and the vilest dress, will take place of the present elegancies of your life. No servant to attend you ! no companion to entertain you ! It is yourself alone that must give you pleasure amidst a thousand objects that will give you disgust. And yet it is far from certain that you will retain even this complaisance for yourself. When captivity shall have deprived that beauty of its use, will the fair possessor any longer find a pleasure in it ?

But was, then, that wonderful beauty, the ornament, the boast of human nature, was it given you to be concealed ? do not you stand accountable for it to the world, to your friends, to yourself ? formed, as you are, to diffuse universal pleasure, to dispel the gloom of melancholy, and call forth every idea of joy ! let the ugly and infirm be shut up in convents. The inspiration that directs them thither is divine. It is the voice of nature, that bids them retire from that society where they do no honor to their Creator. But, in your case, Madam, this is absolutely a temptation of the Devil, who, envious of the glory of God, cannot endure that admiration with which we behold the fairest of his works. Believe me, twenty long years of psalm-singing

will not contribute so much to that glory, as the exposing your beauties one single day to the eyes of the admiring world. Your proper religion is to appear in society. It is the best worship you can pay to your Creator. If those charms, like common beauties, must submit to the devastations of time, then may you retire; and after having fulfilled the design of him that made you, may you sing his praises in the retreat of a convent. But, follow the scheme that his providence has laid down for your life; for, if you withdraw from society before the time he has appointed, you will frustrate his intentions to gratify his enemy.

Should you listen, after all, to the insinuations of that enemy, it will not be one of your least misfortunes, that you have none but yourself to charge with the evils that fall upon you. Your illustrious sister may lay the blame of her sufferings on the violence with which she has been treated; on the cruelty of a husband who compelled her, and on the injustice of a court, which supported that husband. She has a thousand causes, real or imaginary, on which she may charge her misfortunes. You have only one, and that one is yourself. You fall not by the error, or the injustice of others, but by

your own. I am the voice of the divine intentions, and you will not hear me. Providence avails itself of my reason to save you ; but when your ruin is in the question, you will consult only yourself. Yet the day will come, when, overborne by all the evils I have described, you will think, but too late, of him who would have prevented them.

Possibly, you may be flattered by the voice of public fame and popular curiosity, which your retirement will undoubtedly excite. By an extravagance of vanity you may be induced to deprive the world of the greatest beauty it can boast ; while others consign to the retreats of piety nothing more, than either their natural deformity, or the ruins of a departed face. But, are the errors of opinion, then, to take place of truth and nature ? and who, after all, has had the hardiness to assure you, that your resolution will not appear as absurd as it is extraordinary ? is it clear that the resolution itself is any thing more than a transient humour ? a piece of holy knight-errantry ? shall we not be apt to say, that the duchess of *Mazarin* is going three hundred leagues in quest of an adventure ? of a heavenly one, if you please ; but still it is a species of adventure.

I doubt not that you hope for much happiness in the conversation of your illustrious sister. But if I am not mistaken, that happiness will be of short continuance. After having spent three, or four days, in conversation about *France* and *Italy*; concerning the passion of the king, and the pusillanimity of your uncle; on what you might have expected to *be*, and on what you now *are*; after having run through every idea of the family of *Colonna*, of your removal from *Rome*, and the ill success of your journies, you will find yourself in the captivity of a convent; and that captivity will be rendered more painful by the remembrance of that delightful liberty you enjoyed in this land of freedom. Even those things which you now behold with indifference, will then have their charms; and what you now abandon through disgust, will then excite your envy. What fortitude, what force of mind, will be sufficient to support? to support you under the sense of present sufferings, and blessings that are lost.

Be it supposed my apprehensions may be vain, and my conjectures ill founded! Be it supposed, you may still find a charm in the conversation of your sister, that shall compensate for all the evils of your confinement; yet is it sure

that you shall have free access to it? it is a maxim in convents to suffer no connections, or intimacies, because the union of individuals is considered as a kind of revolt from the obligations contracted with the order. Besides, the industry of the prince may exert itself in this respect, and prevent that communication which must appear formidable to a suspicious and injurious husband. I pass over the caprices of an Abbess, and the secret jealousies of the sisterhood, even industrious to oppress that merit, which obscures their own. Thus it can only be for the society of your sister that you enter on the religious life; and yet, perhaps, that sister you will hardly ever see. Your life therefore, will either pass in the solitary indulgence of your own sad thoughts, or in the society pregnant with follies and absurdities; where you will be wearied with sermons in a language that is unknown to you, harrassed with matins that will disturb your rest, sickened with the dull chanting of the same round of vespers, or teased with the troublesome murmurs of some industrious rosary.

What is it, then, you have to do, madam? Make a right use of your reason: if you attend not to it, you are undone. What a loss! should

you no longer find the use of that exquisite discernment, that unrivalled sense ! What crime have you committed that can justify so severe a sentence against yourself ? What crime have your friends committed, that they must feel the effects of the same severity ? It is usual for the *Italians* to assassinate their enemies ; but their friends are free from the savage justice and the vengeance they assert.

Madam *De Beverweert* and myself are truly miserable. The sense of your misfortunes affects us extremely ; and I am at this moment the most wretched of men, because you are resolved to make yourself the most unhappy of women. In my morning visits to Madam *De Beverweert* we sit looking on each other in melancholy silence, and that silence is always accompanied with tears. Have some compassion for us, Madam, if you will have none for yourself. For the advantage of our friends do we not willingly deprive ourselves of the comforts and conveniencies of life ? Your friends intreat you only to give up your miseries for their sakes, and their intreaties are vain.

Yet notwithstanding this more than natural obduracy, reflect, Madam, I intreat you, on what I have already laid before you. You are

now on the brink of a precipice—one step forward, and you perish unavoidably—One step backward, and you are in perfect safety. Your happiness and misery are in your own disposal. Only resolve to be happy, and you will be so.

However, should you abandon the world, which seems at present your intention, I have one consolation left, that I shall not stay long in it. Nature, more merciful than you, will soon put an end to my wretched being ; yet still your commands will take place of her's ; and the right she has over me will be but secondary to that I have given you. I am prepared to go whenever I shall have my summons ; and if you, as a last instance of your cruelty, shall refuse, I will hide myself in some solitary desert, and sicken at the thought of all society but yours. Your idea shall take place of every other object, and I will retire even from myself, that I may for ever think of you. Such are the proofs I will exhibit to the world of the power of your charms, and the force of my despair.

*The Duchess of MAZARIN on her retiring into a
convent.*

Ye holy cares that haunt these lonely cells,
These scenes where salutary sadness dwells ;
Ye sighs that minute the slow wasting day,
Ye pale regrets that wear my life away ;
O bid these passions for the world depart,
These wild desires, and vanities of heart.
Hide every trace of vice, of follies past,
And yield to Heaven the victory at last.

To that the poor remains of life are due,
'Tis Heaven that calls, and I the call pursue.
Lord of my life, my future cares are thine.
My love, my duty greet thy holy shrine.
No more my heart to vainer hopes I give,
But live for thee, whose bounty bids me live.

The power that gave these little charms their
grace,
His favours bounded, and confined their space,
Spite of those charms shall time, with rude
essay,
Tear from the cheek the transient rose away
But the free mind ; ten thousand ages past,
Its maker's form, shall with its maker last.

Uncertain objects still our hopes employ,
Uncertain all that bears the name of joy!
Of all that feels the injuries of fate
Uncertain is the search, and short the date.
Yet even that boon what thousands wish to gain;
That boon of death, the sad resource of pain!

Once on my path all fortune's glory fell,
Her vain magnificence, and courtly swell:
Love touch'd my soul at least with soft desires,
And vanity there fed her meteor fires.
This truth at last the mighty scenes let fall,
And hour of innocence was worth them all.

Lord of my life! O, let thy sacred ray
Shine o'er my heart, and break its clouds away!
Deluding, flattering, faithless world adieu!
Long hast thou taught me, GOD IS ONLY TRUE!
That God alone I trust, alone, adore.
No more deluded, and misled no more.

Come, sacred hour, when wavering doubts
shall cease!
Come holy scenes of long repose and peace!
Yet shall my heart to other interests true,
A moment balance 'twixt the world and you?
Of pensive nights, of long-reflecting days,
Be yours, at last, the triumph and the praise!

Great, gracious Master, whose unbounded
sway,
Felt thro' ten-thousand worlds, those worlds
obey ?

Wilt thou for once thy awful glories shade;
And deign't' espouse the creature thou hast
made ;

All other ties indignant I disclaim,
Dishonour'd those, and infamous to name !
O fatal ties, for which such tears I've shed,
For which the pleasures of the world lay dead !
That world's soft pleasures you alone disarm ;
That world without you, still might have its
charm.

But now those scenes of tempting hope I close,
And seek the peaceful studies of repose ;
Look on the past as time that stole away,
And beg the blessings of a happier day.

Ye gay saloons, ye golden-vested halls,
Scenes of high treats and heart-bewitching
balls !

Dress, figure, splendor, charms of play, farewell,
And all the toilet's science to excel !

Even love that ambush'd in this beauteous
hair,

No more shall lie, like *Indian* arches, there.

Go, erring love ! for nobler objects given !

Go, beauteous hair, a sacrifice to heaven !

Soon shall the veil these glowing features
hide,
At once the period of their power and pride!
The hapless lover shall no more complain
Of vows unheard, or unrewarded pain ;
While calmly sleep in each untortured breast
My secret sorrow, and his sighs profess.

Go, flattering train! and, slaves to me no
more,
With the same sighs some happier fair adore !
Your alter'd faith, I blame not, nor bewail—
And haply yet, (what woman is not frail ?)
Yet, haply, might I calmer minutes prove,
If he that loved me knew no other love !

Yet were that ardour, which his breast in-
spir'd,
By charms of more than mortal beauty fir'd ;
What nobler pride ! could I to heaven resign
The zeal, the service that I boasted mine !
O, change your false desires, ye flattering
train !

And love me pious, whom ye loved profane !

These long adieus with lovers doom'd to go,
Or prove their merit, or my weakness shew,
But heaven, to such soft frailties less severe,
May spare the tribute of a female tear,
May yield one tender moment to deplore
Those gentle hearts that I must hold no more

To M. DE ST. EVREMOND.

SHALT thou, sad servant of my darker days,
Bewail that fortune fairer hours displays ?
Go, witness of the wandering life I led,
And cease those tears, for thee more justly shed.
See the long series of my sufferings o'er !
Avoid the storm, pursue, partake the shore.

Declining years should still in silence close,
And hide their human weakness in repose.
Shall I in life's, in beauty's bloom retire ?
Grown old in courts shall EVREMOND expire ?
Far from those courts, tho' every call divine !
Yet, reason, sense and fortitude are thine.

Are these unheard ! In habit's powerful
 reign
Does reason wield her little arms in vain ?
Yet shalt thou yield to my superior sway :
Thy queen commands thee ; EVREMOND, obey.
Sick of the world, she quits the painful scene,
And calls thee thence, if yet she calls, thy queen.

M. DE. ST. EVREMOND.

O, still my sovereign, whose unrivaled sway,
'Tis yet my pride, my pleasure to obey.
I come—I fly—No !—death that duty ends,
Deprived of thee, the last, the best of friends !

LETTER XLI.

ST EVREMOND TO WALLER.

THERE are two sets of men against whom a writer of any other country than their own stands but an ill chance of preserving his reputation. These are *Dutch* authors and *Dutch* booksellers. They divide you, body and soul, between them. The former steal your works: the latter your name. The authors publish your writings as their own productions: The booksellers publish the productions of others as yours. They treat you like the pirates of *Algiers*. You no sooner fall into their hands, than they strip you naked, and set you to hard labour. I speak of their cruelty by experience. An honest bookseller of *Rotterdam* has not only published several of my pieces in the names of his day-labouring authors, but has set me to work on subjects, of which I am at least as ignorant as the people that wrote in my name. He has made me author of a treatise on the longitude, though there are not above two Stars in the sky that I know by name. I stand on the title page of *Chemical Aphorisms*, though I do not know an *Alembic* from a dark lantern. I am author of a treatise against the *Antinomians*, of whom I know as much as I do of the *Antedilu-*

vians : but what is most provoking, he has introduced me in the character of Field-Marshal of *France*, and has made me write a narrative of a battle, in which I was forced to run away.

This is certainly worse treatment than that which made *Diagoras* turn atheist. We are told, that when a plagiary had stolen and fathered his book, he would no longer believe there were any gods, because they did not punish the thief with a thunderbolt. For my own part, I do not find that the impunity of these caitiffs has made any alteration in my faith. All I am afraid of is, that the Devil has too much sense to let booksellers come into his dominions ; for as he has the character of a genius, it would not be long before they gave him the fool's cap of an author.

I am very confident that my honest friend at *Rotterdam*, were he to carry on trade in his kingdoms, would have no manner of scruple to make him author of a treatise on original sin. This publication would soon be followed by a dissertation on the medical effects of brimstone, *Auctore Serenissimo Diabolo, M. D.* or a narrative of the battle between himself and *Michael*, in which, like the poor Marshal *De St. Evremond*, he was put to the rout.

LETTER XLII.

WALLER TO ST. EVREMOND.

I HAVE often thought that there is a great similarity of genius between *Ovid* and our Mr. Cowley. They have the same fondness for pointed expression, and minute painting. Their enthusiasm and their fancy, and their turn of verse, which is sometimes easy, clean, and natural, and sometimes quaint, have all of them the greatest resemblance of each other. And what is no less observable, their dispositions and tempers are, in many instances, alike. Mr. Cowley's *Complaint* has the very same spirit and features with *Ovid's* melancholy *Elegies* written during his exile; and I am afraid, too, that it will have no better effect.

It always gives me pleasure to observe the coincidence of genius, and taste. For this purpose, when I have the favour of Mr. Cowley's company, I very often take up *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, and read such passages to him as I think will strike him most. What he principally admires in the story of the rape of *Proserpine*, was her grief for the loss of the flowers she had gathered.

Collecti flores tunicis cecidere remissis.

Tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis;

Hæc quoque virgineum movit jactura dolorem.

Had he written on the same subject, I very believe that he would have had the same thought.

In reading the story of *Pyramus* and *Thisbe*, we both concluded that there must be something wrong in the following passage :

Tempore crevit amor, tædæ quoque jure
coissent,

Sed vetuere patres, quod non potuere vetare.

Ex æquo captis ardebant mentibus ambo.

Sed vetuere patres quod non potuere vetare, is certainly nonsense. Yet so it stands in all the editions I have met with, undisturbed by commentators, who pass it over in *sacro silentio*. Nothing, however, is more easy than to remove the error, which lies only in the punctuation. Let the passage stand thus, and it is restored to sense.

—Tædæ quoque jure coissent,

Sed vetuere patres. Quod non potuere vetare,

Ex æquo captis ardebant mentibus ambo.

There is, if I am not mistaken, another error in the same story.

Conscious omnes *abest* ; nutu signisque loquuntur,

If every spy is at a distance, why should they have recourse to nods and signs, to convey their sentiments? That could only be necessary, admitting the case to be quite otherwise. Suppose then we read

Conscious omnis *adest* ; nutu signisque loquuntur.

This alteration is by no means violent, and it at once brings the passage to sense and consistency. However, I am not so hardy as to say, *Sic lege meo periculo*. I only offer this to you by way of conjecture ; but the first, I am satisfied, must be right.

LETTER XLIII.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER.

IT is said of the mouse of *Armenia*, that such is her passion for cleanliness, she will sooner die than come out of her hole, if the mouth of it is by any means made dirty. I own I have often admired the decency of this good mouse, though I despair of imitating it. The love of purity is one of the natural virtues, and it grieves me to think how strangely I have degenerated from it. Ever since I quitted my marshall's baton, I have had, as you lately told me, the least attachment to this virtue of any man living. When I went from *France*, I left their neatness to the men, and took with me the slovenliness of the women. This disposition was abundantly encouraged by a long residence in *Holland*; for the people of that country, like your *English* hogs, keep their sleeping places neat, but their persons dirty. A daily and familiar intercourse with dogs and cats, of which I have always a numerous family, completes the rest. This is a commerce which no consideration whatever could induce me to part with. It gives me as much consequence as belongs to the man who has a large family to provide for, or a province under

his care. It is a constant exercise to my benevolence, which a man, who, like me, is without social connections, must always be in danger of losing. Without any servant of my own species, I live with the magnificence of a prince, who has a large retinue ; and, what no prince in the world can safely assert, I am convinced that my domestics are unexceptionably faithful. I amuse myself by preserving a good understanding, and maintaining the balance of power between the two species of animals that attend me. They know their respective provinces, and make no encroachments on each other. My cats have the territory of the shoulders, my dogs of the lap.

I love to keep up the dignity of ancestry, and I dine, as I suppose, in the same style and manner with my first parent, before his expulsion from Paradise. I have seen a painting of *Tintoret's*, representing him at dinner, surrounded by a variety of his fellow creatures ; to such of which as were capable of partaking with him, he was distributing his bounty. In this respect I find another satisfaction in the society I speak of. I gratify myself by distinguishing and rewarding merit. Modesty goes a great way with me ; and the animal that is least importunate is always fed the first. You will hardly be-

lieve what an effect this has had upon the teasers. Observing the rewards of distance and modesty, they have totally changed their conduct, I took the liberty of mentioning this to the king.—
“My dogs, (says he) *St. Evremond*, are more incorrigible than yours: they will never give over teasing, till they get the bone.”

T

LETTER XLIV.

ST. EVREMOND TO WALLER,

Before the infamous and disgraceful peace of the *Pyreness*, a political writer of considerable name in *France*, proposed upon the necessity of military reinforcements, that the ecclesiastics should be called to the discipline of arms ;—that the Monasteries, like so many graves at the general resurrection, should give up their dead ;—and that a set of men, who were a burthen to society and to themselves, should be made use of in the preservation of civil property. The Cardinal Premier was so enraged at this proposal, that had not the author made a seasonable visit to another country, he would soon have become as useless a subject to *France*, as those whose confinement was voluntary.

Nevertheless there was something very reasonable in what he advanced ; and it is really astonishing, that in a country, distinguished for the cultivation of civil and political knowledge there should be the least remains of any institution so absurd as that of cutting off a number of men from the service of their fellow creatures for the glory of God. Certainly the best and most acceptable services we are capable of rendering to

the Creator of the universe, must be those that arise from the discharge of the social duties: and it has often been matter of serious amazement to me, how ecclesiastics came by the idea, that they should do the greatest honor to God by renouncing all intercourse with his works.

But I suppose there might be reasons of private indulgence, secret intrigue, and uninspected growth of power. These nests of holy loungers the church must have considered as a *corps de reserve*, that would be ready to defend that power which supported them in indolence, in case of unforeseen or dangerous invasions. It is plain that your *Henry* the eighth looked upon them in this light when he had the good sense and the good policy to extirpate them from his dominions.

Christianity, with respect to the support of such institutions as these, is a system more burthensome and less serviceable than *Mahometism*, or even *Druidism*. The *Druid* would retire to his groves for the exercise of his superstitious devotion; but if his country were attacked by an enemy, he failed not to be in front of battle.

In proportion to the progress of philosophy and the advancement of moral knowledge, it might have been expected, that the idea of rendering the body of ecclesiastics useful to society, should have been more effectually attended to. But perhaps there never was a time, when they were less serviceable than at present.

When your *Richard*, the first was at war with *France*, he found a formidable enemy in *Philip*. Bishop of *Beau-vieu*, who annoyed his coasts with distinguished valour and intrepidity. The Bishop, however, was at length taken by *Richard* in a skirmish. The Pope demanded his dismissal as an ecclesiastical person, and bade the King reverence his son's coat. *Richard* immediately sent the Bishop's coat of mail to the Pope, with these words engraven upon it: "See whether this be thy son's coat or not."

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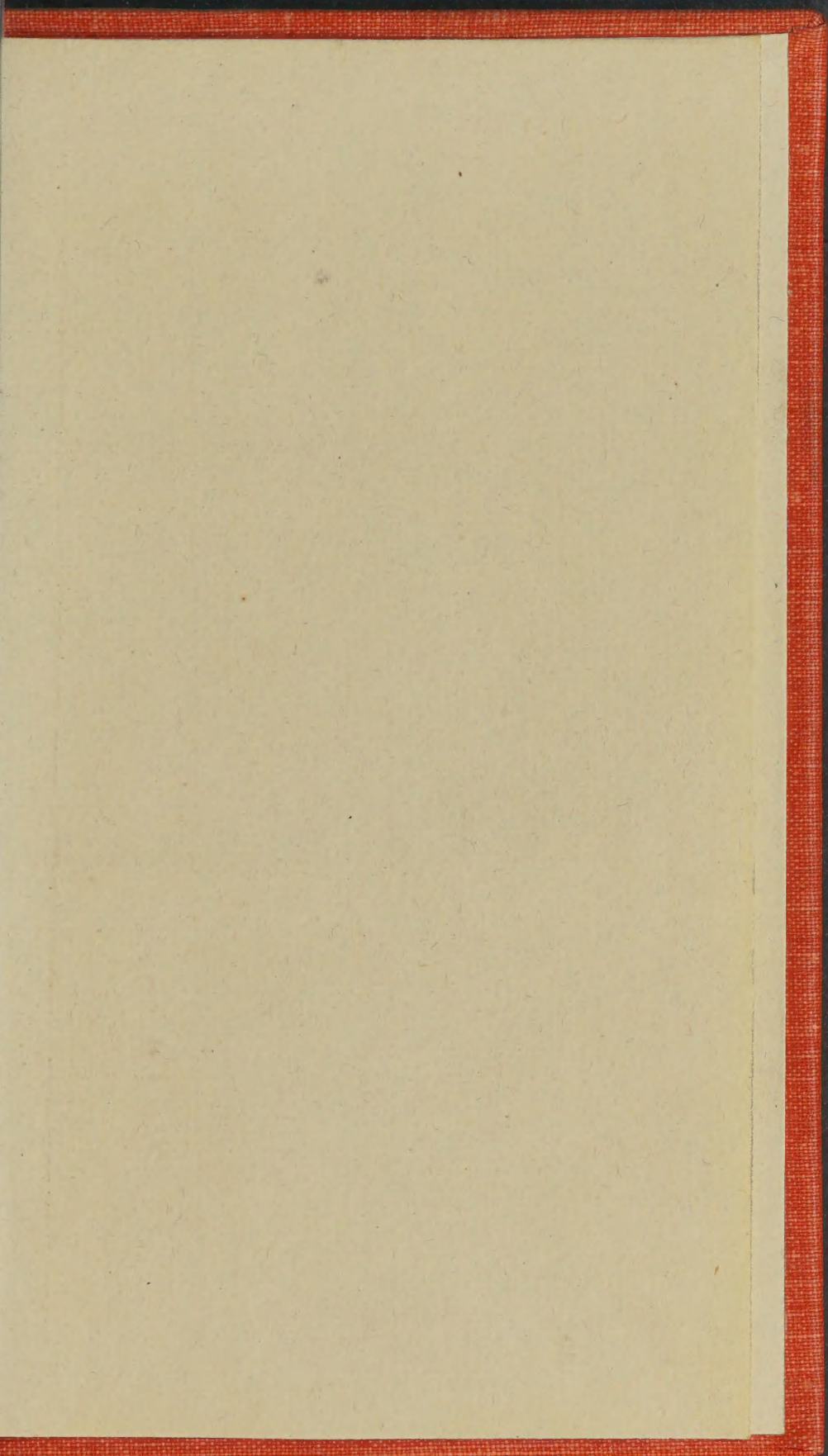
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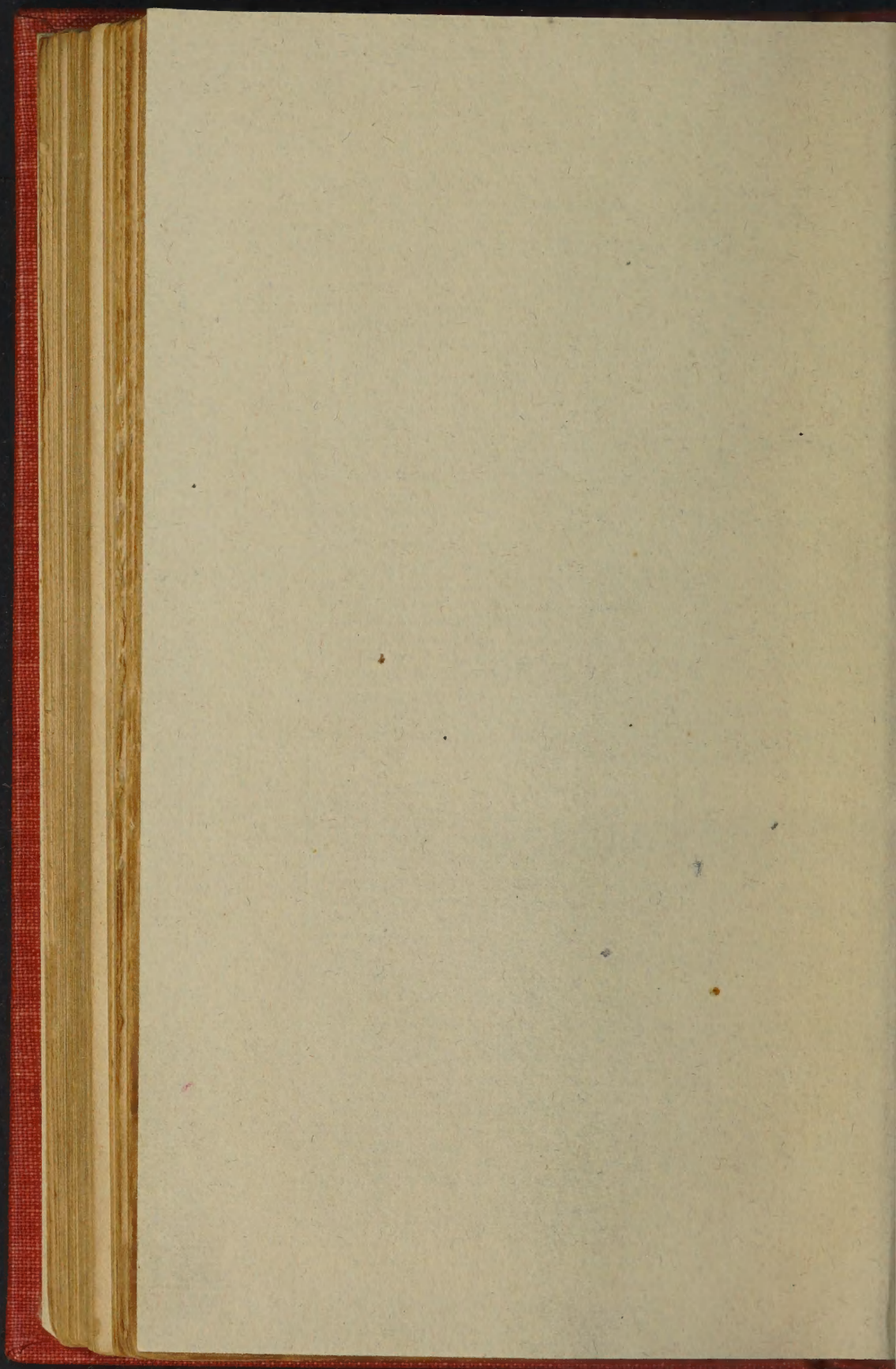
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